

# The Month in Review

"IT IS NECESSARY to change a great deal in our People's Government, in the organization of our industry, in the methods of work of the State and Party apparatus. It is necessary, in short, to replace all the bad parts of our model of Socialism. . . . What is constant in Socialism boils down to the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. The roads to the achievement of this goal can be and are different. . . . The model of Socialism can also vary. It can be like that of the Soviet Union. It can be shaped in a manner seen in Yugoslavia. It can be different still. . . ." These words were addressed to the Eighth Plenum of the Polish Central Committee in October 1956 by Wladyslaw Gomulka in his maiden speech as First Secretary of the Polish Party. The words were carefully chosen. They were meant to bring hope to a country on the brink of economic bankruptcy, torn by internal dissension and yet ready, despite the ravages and ordeals suffered in World War II, to resist a threatened intervention by the Soviet Union. For hours before he delivered his speech Gomulka had been fighting it out with Khrushchev in a ferocious political barroom brawl. While Soviet tanks were on the prowl (officially, on "maneuvers"), armed Polish workers took over strategic positions in the capital and Polish Stalinist Quislings were busy plotting their *putsch*. The First Secretary's words rallied the country and saved the day. A new page was to be written in the history of Poland. "It is a poor idea," Gomulka said then, "that only Communists can build Socialism, only people holding materialist social views. . . ."



The same man recently visited his comrade and collaborator Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow, where he headed a delegation to the Twenty-First Congress of the Soviet Party. A few weeks later, after a brief illness, the Polish First Secretary addressed his own Third Congress of the Polish Party. It was a dreary, routine affair, carefully prepared for long in advance, designed to endorse policies and decisions laid down by a handful of men in the Party's Politburo. It was still, as at the Eighth Plenum, Gomulka's day of triumph. But it was the triumph of a Party leader, not of a national hero.

A large measure of "unity" in Communist ranks has been effected under Gomulka's leadership by his endorsement of and alliance with the so-called Pulaska group. These are old-time Party wheel-horses, neither Stalinists nor "liberals," who have progressively thrown their weight behind the First Secretary as he turned against the youthful *enragés* who had so courageously helped him to power. As for Gomulka's six-hour-long speech, its most significant aspects were the omissions. Not once did he refer to the "Polish road to Socialism" or to the "Polish October." The Congress thus confirmed the chasm that had been growing between the leadership and the vast majority of the Polish people. It confirmed the fact that "Socialism" in Poland will not be "different" in its essentials and that, though non-Communist cooperation is both wanted and needed, it must not impinge on the Party's exclusive right to power. That, after all, is what turns out to be "constant" in Soviet-type Socialism.

The basic orthodoxy of the current Polish stance and the surprisingly fast reconciliation between Khrushchev and Gomulka cannot be ascribed solely to Soviet pressure for conformity, for a closing of the ranks. No doubt such pressure exists, particularly in the economic sphere, where the USSR is the main provider—and in some cases, the only provider—of essential raw materials. More to the point is the similarity between the two leaders' inter-

nal policies following the debacle of the de-Stalinization campaigns in both countries. Each in his own way has tried with remarkable single-mindedness to steer a "middle road"—middle within the Party, not the country. This has meant a rigid adherence to the goals Stalin set long ago for Communist Parties in each nation and for the movement as a whole. At the same time it has also meant far greater flexibility in the tactics to be adopted in reaching these goals. Insensate terror, self-defeating schemes proved useless by practice, insularity and paranoiac distrust—these were abandoned and so far have not been revived either in Poland or in the USSR. The general atmosphere seems to be more relaxed and in both countries there is undoubtedly far more concern for the economic welfare of the individual. But in neither case—and this applies to Gomulka as much as to Khrushchev—has there been a softening in intentions, a blurring of the Communist vision. That vision remained hard and clear even during the tactical retreats. Now, as shown by both Congresses, the era of internal concessions and retreats abroad is over. The order of the day is to redouble efforts to catch up with the West. "We shall bury you," said Khrushchev. "At present," said Gomulka, "capitalism is already on the wane, condemned by the progress of history to depart from the arena of human events. The laws that rule social development are paving the way with merciless consistency towards the universal victory of Socialism."

These are harsh words that hold a terrifying meaning in the present crisis over Berlin. They indicate, as does the crisis itself, that the Communist leadership, confident that its own backyard is now secure and that the West is weakening, believes it must press on to its "destined" victory. The tactical mood that led to the Soviet retreat from Austria is not the mood that governs the more recent Soviet-Satellite policies. In 1956, the Soviet bloc was on the defensive in Eastern Europe; until recently a balance was maintained; now, as under Stalin, the movement is again forward. The posture is perhaps more reasonable, but the underlying drive is not.

The optimism of the Communist hierarchy, their apparent belief that they now again firmly control an area which not long ago was still seething with unrest, has lately been reinforced by reports on last year's achievements. Everywhere the plans were allegedly overfulfilled and one country after another announced that the pace could—and would—be accelerated. Even Poland succumbed to this trend. At the Congress it was announced that production this year would be higher than had been planned. Similarly, in Hungary, the other former trouble-spot, many of the targets of the Three Year Plan are now to be completed in two years.

Perhaps the most sensational recent development in the area, one that is bound to gladden the heart of every orthodox Communist, took place in that country. In two months, from January 1 to March 1, 200,000 persons joined the agricultural collectives which, as a result, doubled in both membership and arable area to surpass, with an astoundingly short spurt, the highest pre-Revolt level. Considering that in 1953 the collectives lost half their membership and that three years later they crumbled once again, the feat is extraordinary. It was apparently accomplished by declaring whole villages "collectivized" before the actual fact and entrusting all administrative functions in an area to a single body controlled by Party members in key collectives. The economic, political and social life of villages was thus taken over by men dedicated to further collectivization. Peasants must have found open resistance useless. This sad surrender, after a long and bitter fight, was dramatized by the endorsement of Bela Kovacs, once a staunch anti-Communist and leader of the Small-holders' Party.

The Yugoslavs, long shrewd observers of developments to the East, have recently sent out warnings on the real meaning of events in the Soviet bloc. In an article on the Soviet Congress, the Party weekly *Komunist* (Belgrade) pointed out that "regarding relations with non-Communist workers' parties, [the Soviet position] . . . can be appraised as a step backward from the Twentieth Congress. The working masses of these parties are seen as a possible ally only in the struggle for peace [i.e. propaganda—Ed.], and not in the struggle for Socialism. The force of Socialism is reduced, as before, chiefly to the force of the Socialist camp countries and the Communist Parties." In other words, the Soviet-Satellite leaders may talk of cooperation but they are not seriously interested in it. That, it seems, is the lesson to be drawn from the two Congresses and the latest happenings within the area.

*Because of the immense complexities of the problem and the dearth of information available, there has been a lack of the kind of objective discussion of minorities in Eastern Europe which can contribute to a clearer understanding of social and political realities in the orbit. The present two-part study is an attempt to help supply the basis for such an investigation. It is necessarily incomplete in that it concentrates on the present without appraising in depth the intricacies of the historical past; it is also shaped by the kind of information the Communist regimes see fit to release. The editors, aware of the many conflicting rights and interests involved, approach the subject with no parti pris: the intention is to present the latest information and to relate these facts to the nature of Communist administration in the area.*

*The first article, in the March issue, discussed minority groups common to many of the countries of the area. This study covers the remaining minorities, considering each country separately; latest available statistics are included.*



Members of the Russian minority in Poland.  
Poland (Warsaw), No. 9, 1957

## Minorities in Eastern Europe – II

**M**ORE THAN A DECADE of intimidation and cunning concession has brought a surface calm to the potentially explosive minority situation in the Satellite States. The intimidation, of course, is a part of the daily atmosphere for all Soviet bloc subjects, not merely for those of minority origin, but the concessions, to an appreciable extent, are a new departure in many sections of the area.

Historically there have been frequent instances in Eastern Europe of minorities being persecuted—or at least penalized—on ethnic grounds. Indeed, the use of “foreign” languages and customs were often in themselves ample provocation for discrimination. This is no longer the case for most of the present-day minorities. They are allowed, they are even encouraged, to speak the tongue and continue the traditions of their ancestors. Now national or group pride and the accouterments of ethnic individuality are freely permitted, but only to the point of challenge—however slight—to Communist rule and policy. At that point the minority must forego all group feelings and must, at best, comply with regime orders, at worst, vocally uphold the authorities.

The right to language and tradition then is a limited one, granted by the State and liable to rescission at the first clashing of loyalties. At such time the ordinary member of a minority must merely submit, but his titular leader must do more—he must actively parrot the latest line if he is to keep his comparatively high position, be it parliamentary representative of his people, editor of their newspaper, or official in their mass organizations, collective farms or “labor unions.”

### Bulgaria: The Macedonian Quarrel

**T**HE REAL ATTITUDE of the Soviet-dominated countries toward the minorities is perhaps best exemplified by current handling of the historic Macedonian controversy. In a series of propaganda attacks which are patently a part of the areawide anti-Tito campaign, the Bulgarians have accused the Belgrade government of systematic persecution of the Macedonian peoples in Yugoslavia. These charges are, of course, nothing new; they have waxed and waned, since the end of World War II, with changes in the

bloc's relations with Yugoslavia, and the latter country has not been derelict in counterattacking with accusations of Bulgarian mistreatment of the Macedonians living in Bulgaria. However, the bloc's willingness to use this historic quarrel clearly shows its basic attitude towards the minority, whose rights and desires it so blatantly subordinates to the dictates of the campaign against the "heretic" Communist State. Perhaps it may also be taken as a sign of confidence, almost of braggadoccio, that the Soviets have been willing to reignite the long-smoldering Macedonian controversy, to use this ancient quarrel in the contemporary political struggle. (The same might be said for another Soviet-inspired offensive in the anti-Tito campaign, that of the Albanian regime against alleged "persecution" of their minorities in Yugoslavia; see Albania, below.)

The controversy concerns approximately 300,000 persons of Macedonian origin living in the Pirin Macedonia region of Bulgaria and about 1,300,000 citizens of the Macedonian People's Republic, which is one of the six "republics" of contemporary Yugoslavia.\* (Greece's smaller Macedonian population has not as yet become embroiled.) Briefly stated, the positions of the two embattled regimes may be summed up as follows:

**Bulgaria:** The Macedonians are a geographical, not an ethnic, minority, and they are primarily Bulgarians whose forebears came from Macedonia. The Macedonian tongue is a dialect, not a language; the Yugoslavs have attempted to invent and impose an artificial Macedonian language which is rejected by all but "Titoist traitors." The Bulgarian regime offers complete equality to all its "Bulgarian citizens of Macedonian geographic origin" and acknowledges no desire on their part for independence from the Sofia authorities. On the other hand, the Bulgarian regime is most sympathetic to the aspirations of the people of the Yugoslav Macedonian People's Republic for independence from the Tito Government.

**Yugoslavia:** The Belgrade Government recognizes all Macedonians as a distinct entity, castigates the Bulgarians for withholding full minority status from its own Macedonians and fully sympathizes with the latter people's alleged "yearnings for independence" from the Sofia authorities. The Yugoslavs recognize and foster the Macedonian tongue as a separate language.

Both States accuse each other of "persecutions" of Macedonians. Neither has, in so many words, made territorial demands for the Macedonian sections of the other's country, but both have accused the other of harboring such designs. The highest Party and regime officials of both States have taken part in the polemics, as have the official Party organs. Save for China and Albania, no Communist country has been more virulent in its attacks on the Tito regime than the Bulgarians, and the Yugoslavs have not been hesitant in angry rebuttal.

The Bulgarian stand was stated in the official Party organ, *Rabotnichesko Delo*, (Sofia), December 20, 1958, which castigated the "treacherous Tito clique" for its "willing services to the Western imperialists," and its "aping"

\* Population statistics: Radio Belgrade, June 6, 1958.



In addition to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, there are approximately 300,000 so-called "pomaks," Bulgarian who, during the years of Turkish rule, were converted to Mohammedanism. Their dress, especially that of the women, tends to be similar to Turkish costumes, and many of them have Turkish names, but they speak Bulgarian only. Above, pomak women on a collective farm.

Photo from *Bulgaria Today* (Sofia), March 1958

of alleged "imperialist mistreatment of subject peoples." The newspaper went on to denounce "the artificial, so-called Macedonian language, forcibly imposed by the agents of Belgrade," and ended with a tender of "our most profound sympathies to our Macedonian brothers . . . denied the full freedom of their compatriots living under true conditions of Socialist construction in the Bulgarian People's Republic."

In a typically quick response two days later, *Nova Makedonija*, the Party newspaper in Skopje, in the Yugoslav Macedonian Republic, asked "what exactly is meant by the reference [quoted above] to 'our Macedonian brothers?'" According to the journal, "the inference is clear, it is another manifestation of Bulgarian territorial designs on Yugoslavia under the guise of 'rescuing' so-called 'fellow-countrymen.'" *Nova Makedonija* also upheld the "Macedonian language" and called on the Sofia regime to cease its "discriminatory policy of non-recognition of the existence of its persecuted and deprived Macedonian minority."

There have been only slight changes for the Macedonian people themselves as a result of the newest anti-Tito campaign. The Belgrade Government has apportioned more money for the economic development of the Macedonian Republic, and a concession to their further independence was made by a decision to allow the formation of a national Orthodox Church in Macedonia, although controlled by the Patriarch in Belgrade.



Paradoxically, since the outbreak of the feud last spring there have been frequent holidays declared by both Bulgarian and Yugoslav authorities in which the borders between the two countries have been opened for a few hours to permit families and friends from opposite sides of the frontier to have brief reunions. Both countries have accused the other of distributing propaganda material during these meetings, but otherwise they seem to have been carried off uneventfully.

It is not yet clear what has been accomplished by the revival of the Macedonian question by the Soviet Satellite. Certainly the conditions for Yugoslavia's Macedonians between 1955 and spring of 1958—while Tito's relations with the bloc were for the most part cordial—were not greatly different from those at present. Yet in the earlier period there was a hiatus in the controversy, and in the present it threatens to flare up into the just-short-of-war situation that existed at the time of the first anti-Tito campaign while Stalin was still alive. Aside from the obvious desire to sow internal troubles in the beleaguered country, the most likely design of the new outbreak is to damage the Belgrade government's reputation in the eyes of the uncommitted, formerly colonial States of the Middle and Far East and thus to prevent the Yugoslavs from cementing their increasingly close ties with this "third group" of nations.

## Other Bulgarian Minorities

At present, only the Turks among the minority peoples seem to be causing the regime any untoward concern. The Macedonian situation, as recounted above, is primarily a matter of foreign policy, and there appears to be little trouble from either the self-oriented Gypsies or the Israel-oriented Jews (see previous article). The historically large Greek minority dwindled to insignificant size after the population exchanges during the Nineteen Twenties, although a small number of Greek Communists took refuge

in Bulgaria after the rout of the Markos forces in the Civil War at the end of the last decade.

The areawide change of policy (circa 1950) toward many minorities—placating some who had previously been discriminated against—was reflected in Bulgaria in the regime attitude toward peoples of Turkish background living within the country. Where there had been a concerted effort to send a large portion of the Turkish population back to the country of origin, which resulted in over 150,000 Turks leaving Bulgaria between August 1950 and October 1951, there is now a concerted and well-propagandized policy of wooing the minority to Communism and loyalty to the regime—though not necessarily to the Bulgarian language and national customs.

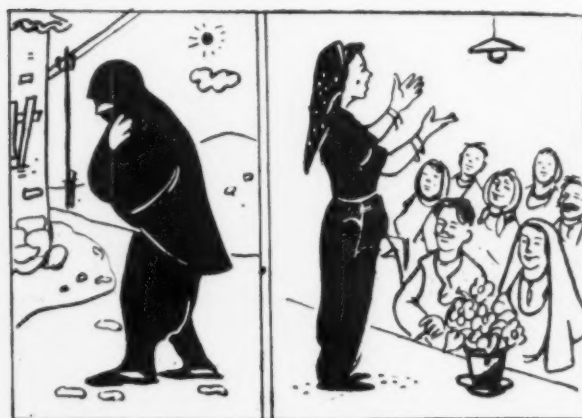
It is noteworthy, however, that the most recent census, that of December 1, 1956, did not list the Turkish, or any other minority, in the country. A previous regime source, the official *Geografia* (Sofia), 1951, put the Turkish population at 500,000, a figure which would appear to have been arrived at after the departure of the emigres to Turkey.

Most of the Turkish minority now live, as farmers, in the northeastern section of the country, although there are also significant numbers in the south and in the Rodopa region. Most are Moslems, and it is the latter allegiance which the regime has sought to combat with particular vigor. The difficulties inherent in this anti-religious stand may be gleaned from many items in the press. For example, on June 28, 1958, a Party newspaper, *Rodopska Borba*, which is published in Kaskovo in southern Bulgaria, discussed the areawide problem of separating actual Party members from their faith:

"There are still Communists who serve religion. Such is the case in the Bulgarian Moslem village of Gorni Yurutsi, District of Ivailovgrad, where the Party organization has only six or seven members. When speaking with the Party Secretary, one obtains the impression that he is a convinced atheist, but as soon as the *Hodja* [Moslem religious leader] shouts, he hurries to the Mosque. He is followed by other Party members, with the exception of one Communist, but the latter is shunned by the remaining Party members. The *Hodja* has also succeeded in attracting 95 percent of the DUPY [Bulgarian Communist Youth Organization] members to the Mosque."

Since the great majority of Turks are Moslems, and since the above article appeared in a newspaper which is published in an area containing a large Turkish population, it may be taken for granted that the attack was aimed not simply at religion, but at the minority itself.

There has been an increase in Turkish-language publications, schools and "cultural activities." According to *Rabotnichesko Delo*, November 24, 1957, "there are at present 1,152 State-supported Turkish-language schools with over 103,000 pupils." The same article stated that "during the 1943-44 school year there were only 365 Turkish self-supporting schools with 34,800 pupils." These schools appear to be nearly all on a primary level. However, on March 15, 1958, Radio Sofia averred that the Ministry of Education and Culture "has again reserved a certain number of vacancies for student-candidates of Turkish origin in higher-education establishments."



A Bulgarian boast that it has emancipated women of the Turkish minority. Left: "Before"; right: "After."

Cartoon from *Za Kooperativno Zemele* (Sofia), December 7, 1957

In February 1955 the Party began publication of a Turkish-language newspaper called *Yeni Hayat*. There has also been increased activity in the literary field. According to *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), May 17, 1958, "between 1944 and 1957, 1,040 books in 4,350,000 volumes in the Turkish language were published." The same newspaper, the official organ of the Fatherland Front, carries frequent articles about the minority. On November 5, 1958, for example, it stated that Front activity must be "doubled and trebled" in order to do away once and for all with the harmful residue of the past in the consciousness of all Turks, Jews and Gypsies."

## Poland

CERTAIN DECISIVE FACTORS tend to ease the minority problems confronting the present-day Polish regime. First, a particularly devout kind of Roman Catholicism accounts for the religious loyalty of upwards of 90 percent of the entire population and thus provides a broad basis of unity. Second, great segments of the prewar minority peoples have been eliminated: the Germans by deportation, flight or regime "silencing" methods; the Jews in Nazi death camps. (See previous article.) Third, many of the minorities have retained at least the outward forms of "Polishness" to avoid "repatriation" to the USSR after World War II. For the same reason many of these also left their native sections—uncomfortably close to the postwar Soviet frontier—and scattered throughout the country, including the Western Territories, thus weakening historic ties to the land and to the formerly unified mass of their compatriots.

As elsewhere in the area, the Polish regime refused to recognize the existence of minorities during most of the postwar Stalinist era. Demographic data published several times each year by the Statistical Office never mentioned the subject, and the 1950 national census listed no minorities. In the second half of 1955, however—in the wake of the areawide "thaw"—fragmentary reports began to appear in the Warsaw press; and in the next two years some information on all the minorities began to be published.

After the Gomulka take-over in October 1956, the regime devoted increasing public notice to the problem. For example, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm (Parliament) held a two-day discussion on minority problems, and, according to *Zycie Warszawy* (Warsaw), July 11, 1957, recommended formation of "cultural" groups, organization of schools and publication of minority-language periodicals. Significantly, however, the Committee also called for the "greatest possible efforts to teach Socialist ideas and methods" to the minorities, though at the same time, denouncing the Stalinist "methods of the past."

## Ukrainians Uprooted

The most numerous of the minority peoples now in the country are the Ukrainians, of whom 200,000 live in the Western Territories, and 20,000 "elsewhere," according to *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw), May 1958. As may be gathered from these statistics, the bulk of the minority no longer resides in its ancestral land in the southeastern section of

the country. The removal, of course, was a result of World War II, when the Ukrainians fled before the advancing Red Army, or were later transplanted by the Polish government. Most of their territory was annexed by the USSR, and many of the minority publicly, if not privately, asserted their "Polishness" in order to avoid Soviet citizenship.

Resettlement from the Western Territories to their former homes is, naturally enough, one of the chief problems involving the Ukrainian minority. In the past two years a very small number have been allowed to return. The weekly newspaper of the Ukrainian Cultural Society, *Nasze Slowo* (Warsaw), gave details of some family resettlements in its issues of October 26, and November 9 and 30, 1958. The stress of the articles was on the "almost impossible economic hardships" which followed the return to the homelands. Earlier in the year the same newspaper, March 16, declared that 330 families had returned to the area with government financial aid amounting to 3,000,000 *zloty*. The March 30 issue told of "a large number of illegal returnees . . . who live in extreme misery and hardship." The subject was further discussed in the August 1958 issue of *Nowe Drogi*, which stated that a resolution of the Party Central Committee in April 1957 "envisaged" resettlement in the "southeastern territories only in cases where new owners had not taken over and cultivated the farmland."

From the above data it may be surmised that the regime has made efforts to repatriate a very small proportion of the uprooted families, but that large-scale resettlement is not contemplated. The problem is, doubtless, further complicated by Ukrainian repatriations from the USSR. Reliable statistics on such returnees are not available, although the periodical, *Wies Wspolczesna* (Warsaw), October 1957, stated that 500 were repatriated between January 1956 and July 1957.

The Ukrainians, as do all Polish minorities, have a puppet "Cultural Society." *Nasze Slowo* averred on March 30, 1958 that the Society's aims are "to further Ukrainian cultural life and to build Socialism together with the Polish nation." The paper added that the Society "is not and cannot be regarded as a political representation of the Ukrainian minority." The Ukrainian language is taught in some 140 schools throughout the country. (*Sztandar Ludu* [Lublin], April 28, 1958.)

## Byelorussians and Russians

"There is still discrimination against Byelorussians," the official Party organ, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), stated on December 11, 1957. The journal went on to discuss "Byelorussian peasants who try to hide their nationality" and "functionaries in smaller townships who are slandered merely because of their Byelorussian nationality."

The situation, of course, is not new, but official recognition of it is. The regime has apparently made real efforts to end the social conditions which made minority peoples seek to hide their national identity. Likewise, it has steadily called for a halt in job discrimination. But the success of these efforts is, at best, problematical, especially in view of the fact that policies formulated by more or less "liberal" Communists in the capital must be administered by pro-

vincial Party functionaries who frequently retain their Stalinist convictions.

The Byelorussians, most of whom are peasants, live chiefly in the eastern part of Bialystok Province. According to *Nowe Drogi*, May 1958, there are 200,000 of them in the entire country. The April 28, 1958 edition of *Sztandar Ludu* said there were 54 Byelorussian language schools.

The minority has a weekly newspaper, *Niwa* (Bialystok), and according to that journal, June 17, 1957, the Byelorussian Social and Cultural Society numbered only 1,000. There was a "Second Byelorussian Congress" in Bialystok on March 30, 1958, at which "any resurgent chauvinism or nationalism on the part of the Bialystok minority was attacked." (*Nasze Slowo*, April 6, 1958.) This indication of

ferment within the minority was not enlarged upon, and there have been no further reports.

Although the Russian minority is substantial in size, numbering over 150,000, according to *Trybuna Ludu*, January 5, 1958, it has received comparatively little treatment in the press. This may be due to the overwhelming anti-Russian feelings of the general population. It may also reflect the awkwardness of the situation facing the statisticians, who would be expected to differentiate between Russians living permanently in Poland and Soviet citizens stationed in the country as "technicians" and as members of the Soviet forces. It was not made clear in the *Trybuna Ludu* population estimate quoted above exactly what kind of Russians were included, and subsequent published listings of minority populations have not mentioned the minority. It is believed that the "permanent" Russians are centered in the Western provinces, although substantial numbers settled in Warsaw and Lodz after the Soviet Revolution.

The extent of Russian-language schools is not known, although there is a weekly newspaper called *Russky Golos*, and the familiar "Cultural Society" exists. A brief report of the Warsaw branch's "annual meeting" on March 15, 1958 appeared in *Nasze Slowo*, March 30. According to the journal, plans were made at that time to open a school, a kindergarten and a movie theater.

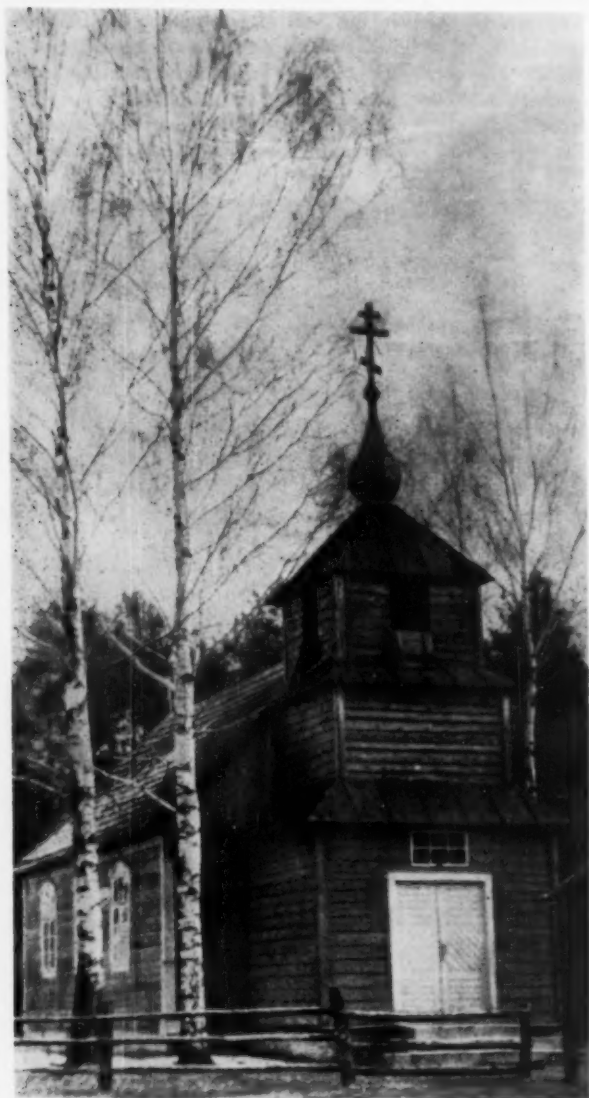
### Other Minorities

Chief among the smaller minority peoples in Poland are the Lithuanians (25,000), Slovaks (20,000), Czechs (5,000) and Greeks (5,000).<sup>\*</sup> All have "cultural societies," all are predominantly farmers, except the Greeks who are largely employed in the Walbrzych coal mines. The April 28, 1958 edition of *Sztandar Ludu* (Warsaw) listed minority-language schools only for Slovaks (28) and Lithuanians (8). There are books published in all the languages, but apparently no regular newspapers.

What little news there is in the Polish press about these minorities is similar to that concerning the more numerous peoples. For example, "a decade of Polish-Lithuanian culture" was celebrated in Poland and in the Soviet Lithuanian "Republic" in mid-1957, at which time "literary surveys" of the two countries were read in the various meetings. (*Niwa*, June 23, 1957.)

The Czechoslovak Cultural Society has expanded its activities by opening a "house of culture" with a restaurant in Kudowa-Zdroj (near the common frontier), and sending several delegations to Prague. (*Nasze Slowo*, February 16, 1958.) Czechoslovak-Polish friction over frontier lines (see Czechoslovakia, below) does not seem to have affected minority relations to any large extent in either country. Greek sources report that many persons of Greek origin have left Poland for the "homeland" in the past two years. Some of these were self-exiled members of the Greek rebel army of General Markos and had been in the country for a decade.

<sup>\*</sup> Population statistics from the following sources: Lithuanian, *Zycie Warszawy* (Warsaw), June 25, 1957 and exile reports; Slovak, *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw), May 1958; Czechs and Greeks, *Radio Kraj*—Warsaw, August 29, 1957.



An old Orthodox church of the Russian minority in Poland.  
*Poland* (Warsaw), No. 9, 1957

## Czechoslovakia

A LARGE LOSS and a small gain in national territory have modified the problems faced by the regime in regard to some of its most prominent ethnic minorities. The loss was incurred when Subcarpathian Ruthenia in the eastern part of the country, occupied by Soviet troops in 1944, was officially ceded to the USSR in June 1945. This entailed the loss to Czechoslovakia of some 750,000 persons, mostly Ukrainians (called Ruthenians before the war) and Russians.\* Since there was never a clear-cut distinction between the two peoples, some Ukrainian-Ruthenians terming themselves Russian, the two nationalities have been merged in official censuses both before the war under the Republic and at present under the Communists.

A less significant territorial change concerned the Polish minority in the Tesin region in eastern Silesia. This section, which is a part of the rich Ostrava coal region, has long been a bone of contention between Poland and Czechoslovakia. It was awarded to the latter country after the First World War, was occupied by Poland after the Munich crisis of 1938 and was restored to Czechoslovakia following World War II. At that time the Poles did not renounce their claim to the Tesin territory—the part retaken by Czechoslovakia—and the Czechoslovaks continued to demand the return of the Orava and Spis areas on the Slovak border which had also been annexed by the Poles after Munich.

Recently the two countries negotiated what was termed as a "final outlining" of their border dispute, according to Radios Prague and Warsaw, October 17, 1958. According to these broadcasts, 837 hectares of the disputed land were transferred to Polish sovereignty and 1,205 hectares to that of Czechoslovakia, and Poland was "compensated for the difference by receiving ownership rights to land totaling 368 hectares owned in Poland by Czechoslovak citizens or organizations."

Latest population statistics on the minorities assert that there are 78,156 citizens of Polish origin in the country; the merged Ukrainian (Ruthenian) and Russian population is 74,898. (*Rude Pravo* [Prague], January 31, 1958.) Extensive minority-language schooling and "cultural" organizational opportunities are available for these minorities.\*\* *Praca* (Bratislava), September 21, 1957, stated that there is one Russian-language periodical, *Druzba*, which is published for students; six Ukrainian periodicals, of which *Druzno Vpered* (Presov) is the most prominent, also appear regularly.

A mass organization called the Cultural Society of Ukrainian Workers is especially active, and there are five-year, eight-year and eleven-year Ukrainian schools, as well

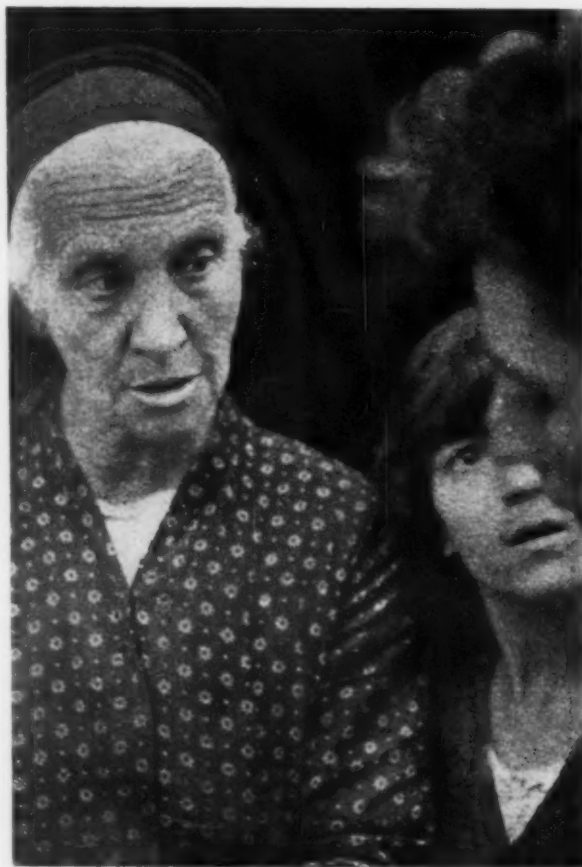
\* According to the last prewar census, there were approximately 120,000 Hungarians, 92,000 Jews, 14,000 Germans, 13,000 Romanians and over 35,000 Czechs and Slovaks living in the province. At the time of the cession, the Czechs and Slovaks were permitted by the USSR either to remain under Soviet rule or to move to Czechoslovakia; most chose the latter course. Almost all the Jews presumably perished during the war. (*Statistical Yearbook of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1936.*)

\*\* *Nova Svoboda* (Ostrava), December 2, 1958, stated that 10,184 pupils are enrolled in 143 Polish-language schools.

as Ukrainian departments in the university and teachers' college. (*Lud* [Bratislava], April 11, 1958.) There are also, apart from a Polish Cultural Organization in the Tesin and Karvina districts, a few Polish-language periodicals, including the Ostrava publications *Glos Ludu* and *Zwrot*, and several eleven-year schools taught in the language of the minority.

## Against Polish "Revisionism"

Among the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia, there was apparently some ferment similar to that which took place in the mother country after the events of October 1956 and brought a "liberalizing" administration of "national" Communists to power. Published samples of this ferment have not appeared in the Polish-language press in Czechoslovakia as they did in Poland, doubtless because the periodicals are controlled by the Prague regime which, of course, has always been far more orthodox than the post-October Polish press authorities. However, certain statements by Party officials and newspapers indicate that the



A woman and girl of the Greek minority in Poland. Most of these are the families of followers of the defeated Greek Communist leader General Markos, who came to Poland in the late 1940's.

Photo from *Swiat* (Warsaw), November 2, 1958



regime remains concerned lest the Polish trend spread into Czechoslovakia by way of the minority. An example in point was the December 2, 1958, number of *Nova Svoboda* (Ostrava) which published an article by Bohumil Belovsky a Secretary of the Party Regional Committee. Excerpts follow:

"It is clear that in our part of the world, particularly in the regions of Tesin and Karvina, the flaring up of nationalism is always a danger, threatening Socialist relationships between the working people of both nationalities and spoiling political unity. Chiefly responsible are sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the clergy and the intelligentsia. They have the support of declassed elements and of some backward members of the working community."

The article also stated that "Czech chauvinism is stronger than Polish bourgeois nationalism," but went on to caution the Polish minority against "two fatherlands" sentiments, and against their "tendency to stress continuously and under all circumstances their national peculiarities out of fear that they might be assimilated in their Czech surroundings." There was also a vague reference to the opening of a Polish school in Havirov which occasioned "a wave of chauvinism" during which "teachers were attacked, children exchanged blows and the matter remained unsolved."

Another example of indicated Polish minority ferment was a Party regional conference held last year in Ostrava at which the then First Secretary Kolar stated that "some bourgeois nationalists of Polish nationality have lately attempted with unusual insolence to change the Polish Cultural Society into a platform for their nationalist propaganda." (*Nova Svoboda*, April 13 and 15, 1958.)

According to Western sources, there has also been unrest among coal miners of Polish ancestry in the Ostrava region, including demands for higher wages. Although the Czechoslovak living standards and wage scales are higher than those of Poland, it may be surmised that the Polish minority was influenced by the success of their neighbors in the coal mines along the border in forcing wage boosts from the Gomulka regime.

Evidence of Ukrainian dissatisfaction with the *status quo*, while not as recent as that concerning the Poles, may be gleaned from the speech of Andrej Marek, First Secretary of the Party District Committee in Medzilaborce, at a national Party conference in June 1956: "The directives of the second Five Year Plan do not contemplate the industrialization [in Ukrainian-inhabited] districts without which it is not possible to speak of full equality for the Ukrainian population." (*Lud* [Bratislava], June 15, 1956.) No official reaction to Marek's complaint on behalf of the Ukrainians was published.

## Hungary

IN THE AFTERMATH of the October 1956 Revolt, the Soviet-installed regime accelerated the already-existing policy of conciliatory recognition of some of the non-political desires of its minority peoples. As elsewhere in the area, these concessions were chiefly in the field of "cultural activities" and emphasized nationality language-schools, mass organizations and publications. Moreover, fuller and less

generalized statistical information on the minorities was published in the press, and the numbers given were palpably closer to the true totals than "estimates" released during the Stalinist years. For example, in the 1949 census, when the existence of many sizeable minorities was all but denied by the regime, it was stated that there were only 30,000 Yugoslavs, 29,000 Slovaks, 26,000 Romanians and only "a few hundred" Germans.\*

During the first premiership of Imre Nagy (1953-55), however, the press dwelt several times on the previously banned subject of minorities, estimating their total at "half a million." (Official Hungarian News Agency, November 12, 1954.)

After the Revolt there were further, more accurate, breakdowns of the population; one of these appeared in the Budapest Party organ, *Nepszabadsag*, August 20, 1958, which stated that there were over 100,000 Yugoslavs, 60,000 Slovaks and 15,000 Romanians in the country. The same article also said that the national minorities were taught in their own languages in five high schools, three teachers' colleges and 280 secondary schools; altogether, the journal averred, 27,968 students were then studying in their native tongues in 380 different schools. *Nepszabadsag* further stated that various minority organizations—all allied with and dominated by the Patriotic People's Front—received an aggregate yearly endowment of between six and seven million *forint*. Minority-language newspapers were listed as *Naroden Noviny* (Yugoslav), *Ludove Noviny* (Slovak), *Foaia Noastua* (Romanian) and *Neue Zeitung* (German).

The increasing attention to the fostering of minority languages—as differentiated, of course, from minority ideals—was further exemplified by a more recent decision of the Ministry of Culture. According to Radio Budapest, November 14, the Ministry "has decided to set up kindergartens for the national minorities in every village where the mother tongue of the majority of the population is not Hungarian, provided that at least 25 children can be registered in such a school."

## Influence of Anti-Tito Campaign

The first anti-Tito campaign, which began in 1948, brought the Yugoslavs (South Slavs) living in Hungary into unhappy prominence as the most mistreated minority in the country. At that time most of the minority lived near the border between the two States, and many of these were forcibly resettled in the interior of Hungary, their homes and land confiscated. There were also numerous cases of arrests and imprisonments. However, the charges were based, not on anti-Yugoslav grounds, but on allegations of "Titoism." While there were probably instances of racism involved, the overt regime policy was always based on political, rather than anti-minority grounds.

When the original anti-Tito campaign simmered down, and afterward, during the period of relative friendliness between the Yugoslavs and the Soviet bloc, it was not diffi-

\* The regime now admits that there are 200,000 Germans in the country; the Gypsy and Jewish minorities, unmentioned in the 1949 census, are estimated at 150,000-200,000 and 80,000 respectively. For details on these minorities, see previous article.

cult for the Budapest authorities to rescind their hostility toward the minority. Indeed, there were public admissions that "errors in justice" had been made, including one noteworthy statement by Gyorgy Non, Public Prosecutor at the time, that "most of the convicted men [alleged Yugoslav Titoists] were Party members at the time of their arrest with many of them looking back upon long and honorable activity in the labor movement." (*Magyar Nemzet* [Budapest], August 26, 1956.) There were also cases of resettled Yugoslavs who were allowed to return to their former homes, although these were a fortunate few. Moreover, some imprisoned Hungarian Yugoslavs were released and "rehabilitated."

The outbreak of the second anti-Tito campaign in April 1958 did not bring similar measures against the Yugoslav minority. Perhaps this may be explained as much by the comparatively milder tone of the Hungarians in the new offensive, as by the fact that most Yugoslavs had not returned to the border areas. At any rate, it is noteworthy that the ill-treatment of the minority after 1948 was largely confined to those living near the frontier.

### Romania

TO A REGIME which had already made the showiest concession of any in the area to minority pride,\* there was only the smallest possible jolt in instituting the policy of wooing ethnic minorities which began in the late Nineteen Forties and which was intensified after the death of Stalin and after the Hungarian Revolt. Along with concessions to the national traditions—though not, of course, to the political desires—of the minorities, schools, publications and "cultural" programs were begun, and there was an increasing amount of "news" about the various ethnic groups in the Romanian press.

Symptomatic of the increased cordiality toward minorities which resulted from the regime's fright after the October Revolt was the action of the government in December 1957 in decreeing a countrywide program which lasted ten days devoted to the "culture" of national minorities.

Along with mass meetings, recitals of folk music, dances and theater programs, there was extensive press coverage of the various events. *Scinteia* (Bucharest), the Party daily, devoted its lead article to the minority situation on December 14 and, after saluting the ten-day program, spoke of the "constantly growing network of schools in the languages of the various nationalities." The journal also stated that a "general directorate for education and culture of the various nationalities" had been set up under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Aside from Magyars, Germans and Jews, the largest ethnic peoples in the country are the Ukrainians (58,637), Russians (38,795), Tatars (20,718), Turks (13,909) and Bulgars (11,943).\*\* No daily newspapers for any of these minorities exist, probably due to their relatively small size;

\* i.e., the granting of "autonomous Statehood" to some of the Magyars of Transylvania, albeit a statehood completely subservient to the central Communist authority in Bucharest. For details, see previous article.

however, each has several publications in its own language. Members of minority races have been "elected" to parliament, but as individuals, not ethnic representatives.

Most of the Ukrainians are concentrated in the region of Baia Mare and Suceava, and are peasants. The bulk of the Russians, Tatars and Turks are in the Constanta region, and they also are, for the most part, of peasant background. The Bulgars and the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes live near the Yugoslav borders, and there were many reports of discrimination against the last three during the first anti-Tito campaign. Such reports are not prevalent in the present (second) campaign.

### Albania

THE PRINCIPAL MINORITY peoples in the smallest—and perhaps most Stalinist of the Communist States—are the Greeks and the Vlachs. Both these ethnic groups number about 35,000, and both speak their native tongues, at least among themselves. However, the regime appears to have made larger concessions to the Greeks, perhaps because of the more active participation of some of their number in the present composition of the Party and regime and in the liberation movement during World War II. At any rate, there are schools in the Greek language, as well as two

\*\* The above statistics are taken from the official *Revista de Statistica* (Bucharest), Number 4, 1957; the same publication lists the local Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—most of whose compatriots now live in Yugoslavia—together, their total being 46,464, the great majority of these known to be Serbs.



The folk-costume of Bulgarians in the Banat region of Romania. *Rumania Today* (Bucharest), No. 4, 1957



A Turk in Romania, who lives on the small Danube island of Ada-Kaleh, wears western costume but clings to the fez.

*Rumania Today* (Bucharest), No. 4, 1957

weekly newspapers and a monthly magazine.\*

Children of the Vlach minority, on the other hand, attend classes in the Albanian language, and there are no regular newspapers in the Vlach tongue. (This, incidentally, is almost pure Romanian; the Vlachs are thought to be of Romanian origin.) They are settled in tiny communities over middle and southern Albania, while the Greeks live in some 30 or 40 villages in the southeastern part of the country.

There are also 600 to 1,000 Serbs inhabiting a village

\* In accordance with an agreement concluded between Albania and Greece, 245 Greek citizens left Albania for Greece, February 16 and 17. (Radio Tirana, February 18.)

on the outskirts of the city of Shkoder and a sprinkling of Macedonians in a few villages in the vicinity of Lake Prespa.

### "Role" in Anti-Yugoslav Campaign

According to repeated assertions in the Yugoslav press, there is a Soviet-directed "distribution of roles" in the area-wide anti-Tito campaign, and the Tirana regime's assignment is to claim—as stridently and provocatively as possible—that Albanians living in Yugoslavia are a "persecuted minority." This accusation is, of course, hotly denied in the larger country, as are other Albanian charges that the Tito Government has long sought to dominate its small neighbor.

The most furious Albanian accusation centers on the "massacre" of large numbers of the minority by the Yugoslav authorities. A passage from the official Party newspaper, *Zeri i Popullit* (Tirana), October 24, 1958, is typical of the tone of the anti-Tito campaign: "What can the Belgrade revisionists say about the 36,000 Albanians barbarously murdered in four years alone, about the terrible terror which they launched in Kossovo during the winter of 1955-56, a terror which surpasses by far all the terrors of the Serbian bourgeois cliques?" The same article refers to "the leaders of Belgrade who openly and brutally interfered in the internal affairs of our country, trying in every way to boss our Party and transform our republic into a Yugoslav province."

The official Yugoslav census of 1953, which fixed the Albanian minority in the country at 752,000, was also cited in the article, which stated that the figure "should have been about 1,400,000." "Murders" and "emigrations compelled by persecutions" explained the lesser figure, according to the Albanian Party organ, which, nevertheless, claimed "more than a million" Albanians in the larger country. (For more details on the Albanian offensive and for the Yugoslav denials and rebuttals, see *East Europe*, Current Developments section, June-December, 1958.)

Obviously these Albanian diatribes, like the Bulgarian accusations over the Macedonian question, are geared to weaken the Tito Government internally and externally. And, like the Bulgarian offensive, they reveal that the Soviet authorities feel confident enough of their control over at least some phases of the minority problem to use them to attack a political enemy.

**Erratum:** In Part I of this series, page 3 of the March issue, the second sentence of the first paragraph began: "Ranging in strength from the numerically predominant Magyars who inhabit Romanian-ruled Transylvania. . . ." This should have read: "Ranging in strength from the numerically predominant Magyars who inhabit the Autonomous Region of Transylvania. . . ." As the article later points out, the Hungarians in Romania constitute a majority only in this Autonomous Region.

# Muse in Chains

By

Peter Halasz

*In the previous article, which appeared in the February issue of East Europe, the author painted a wry picture of backstage life in the Hungarian movie world, where he was submerged as a "frogman." When he was eventually graduated to the rank of full-fledged script writer, Mr. Halasz sank deeper into the murky waters of official bureaucracy. His first article ended with a discussion of the intricate procedure of movie-making according to the State-prescribed, bureaucrat-bedevelled plan. The present article tells of Mr. Halasz' tribulations with the heirarchs of officialdom.*



## LIFE IN THE HUNGARIAN MOVIE WORLD

### Last of Two Articles

OF THE EIGHT MOVIES scheduled under the State plan, one was to be a musical comedy. The plot centered on the nationalization of retail trade—a matter not entirely devoid of humor, although this was, at the time, beside the point.

Tibor Barabas, a diligent writer working strictly along Party lines, had gotten wind of the Party's plan to remodel the minds of small businessmen whose enterprises had been taken over by the State. Barabas belonged to the small group of authors who constantly speculated on what steps the Party would take next, and tried to be ready with a play, novel or poem for every tactical twist. This occupation was not without its dangers, for a work considered a product of foresight on Monday could be judged subversive on Tuesday. Because of this, Barabas and men like him realized that it was advisable to spend their fees immediately (in case the Party asked for a return), and they squandered their incomes as lavishly as the aristocrats had once dissipated their family fortunes.

The aim of the remodelling was to convince former businessmen what an honor it was to work in their own stores as employees at a fixed salary; indeed, this was supposed to represent the fulfillment of their dreams, since they would not merely be selling their own goods but the goods of the State. Barabas felt that the subject called for light treatment, but aware that he did not have a true comic gift, he engaged as his co-author Bela Gador, chief editor of the popular satiric newspaper *Ludas Matyi*. Gador had an excellent sense of humor, but he lacked the talent to guess what the Party would want in two weeks' time. By joining forces and combining foresight with talent, the

two men produced the musical comedy, *State Department Store*.

### Comedy Over A Nationalized Counter

THE STORY WAS ABOUT a department store manager who was opposed to Socialism. He had once been a wealthy businessman and lacked the ability to enjoy the fact that he no longer was. His assistant, on the other hand, was a young man who had risen from the post of errand boy, and who approved of every phase of "Socialist progress." Aside from these two main characters, there were a number of minor ones, some of whom were loyal to the manager, and others to the assistant manager; a few employees could not make up their minds and vacillated between the two. This group included a fashion designer with bourgeois tendencies; but since she was the daughter of a hotel doorman, she was not completely hopeless. The young, enthusiastic assistant manager, who was in love with her, tried to improve her mind by making her read the Party's paper conscientiously every morning.

The old, hostile manager busied himself with hatching plans to undermine the government. Finally, he hit on a fiendish scheme. He told all his relatives to spread the rumor that the government would soon devalue all hundred forint notes so that they would be worth only fifty pengo. Actually, this idea was not so far-fetched, since in 1946 the Party had performed similar tricks with the pengo.\* The manager's idea was that the people would

\* Currency used between 1922 and 1946.



storm the department store, which would then be left without goods.

As planned, the rumor spread like wildfire and people flocked to the store. The assistant manager, however, decided to take things into his own hands: he refused to sell any goods and had the doors closed. The manager was furious, but his threats were in vain. The young man stood firm, and in the end it turned out that his action was justified. Finally, he won the fashion designer, and the political police collared the manager.

Anyone can see that it would be hard to find a more ideal plot for a musical comedy. Indeed, the play was accepted by the Municipal Theater and rehearsals were started. At the same time, the studio ordered me to collaborate with the authors to make a movie out of it. So we got down to work.

### *No Laughing Matter*

Getting down to work meant, first of all, establishing contact with the competent Minister—in this case, Jozsef Bognar, head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Bognar said he was pleased about the planned movie. He called some of the more important aspects of Socialist trade to our attention and asked us to give special attention to the setup in the clothing department. He said that dressmakers' shops would soon be established in department stores and that our movie should have such a shop. He also pointed out that the *per capita* productivity of sales assistants was not satisfactory and that we should emphasize this. The movie was also to include references to higher trade education, better quality production and the bonus system. We busily took notes and said goodbye to the Minister, assuring him that all his suggestions would be incorporated in the movie. We were at the door when he reminded us to call on the Minister of Light Industry, who would also have some things to say.

He certainly did. The Minister of Light Industry was

furious when he read the plot. What? The Communist assistant manager has the doors closed when the people storm the store? Is this faith in the power of a people building Socialism? Do we want to create the impression that goods must be held back? Slander, nothing but slander to show the excellent work of the Ministry of Light Industry in such a false light! This kind of thing, he said, would be rejected indignantly by the working people.

We were in a panic. The Municipal Theater stopped rehearsals and the authors were cold-shouldered in the Artists' Club. They cursed the day the movie studios had first seized upon the play.

We desperately tried to find a way to save both the play and the movie. Finally, we hit upon a solution. It was really quite simple. All we had to do was switch roles—that is, make the old, hostile manager decide to close the doors, and have the young man swing them open; then, just as the people have seized almost everything that they can lay their hands on, trucks of the Ministry of Light Industry arrive loaded with new goods. Although there were still a few stumbling blocks, we felt that everything could be arranged satisfactorily. After all, dialectical materialism is dialectical for the purpose of making it flexible.

### *A Horde Is Not A Family*

The new version, however, aroused the ire of Deputy Minister of People's Education Gyorgy Non, who was Jozsef Revai's most loyal disciple. Non was completely indifferent to the views of the Ministers of Light Industry and Internal Affairs. He was interested only in the "Socialist consciousness" of the people. "What do you mean?" he thundered. "A huge horde storms the department store and plunders the goods? Everyone is deceived by the rumor? Everyone believes that hundred *forint* notes will be devaluated? Such a situation is out of the question."

We defended our plot by saying that not the whole country but only a few thousand people believed in the rumor



Scenes from the musical comedy film *State Department Store*. Left, young love rears its inevitable head: the enthusiastic young assistant manager and the "fashion designer with bourgeois tendencies" ogle each other. Right, "Panic! Close the doors!" as the hordes of "reactionaries" sweep through the store.

Photos from *Beke es Szabadsag* (Budapest), January 25, 1953

and that these people would wear special hats, formerly worn by aristocrats and landowners. "That's not enough," Non grumbled. "There must be workers on the scene who enlighten the masses." "Yes, Comrade Non," Bela Gador said, "but this is supposed to be a musical comedy." "Well, I don't care if they sing," Non answered. "Let them sing as much as you like, so long as the clash takes place. And be careful about the gentry. There shouldn't be many of them. Perhaps it would be best if most of them were relatives of the treacherous manager. First show the whole bunch at a family meeting. That's it. Most of the enemies must be relatives of the manager. Do you understand?"

Indeed, we did. The director broke down and began to cry, right there in the corridor. When he had calmed down, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with the whole thing.

Another director was appointed. It was poor Gertler, who had just managed to recover from his work on the military film, *Clash in Peace*.<sup>6</sup> He had been operated on for an ulcer and had accepted the new assignment even though his doctor had emphatically warned him against all excitement. The premiere at the Municipal Theater was postponed and we worked feverishly on revisions. The composer had to write new music, the playwright, a new text. Before us was the list of requirements: dressmakers' shop, higher trade education, bonus system, the significance of quality production.

We were writing a musical comedy.

It took slightly more than a year to produce the film, and when it was finished we ran into the same situation we had faced after finishing *Clash in Peace*. The first showing was postponed after one very valid objection—namely, that the goods bought up by the manager's reactionary relatives were not then available in any of the State-managed Budapest stores. The audience probably would have hooted and screamed. And the Minister of Light Industry would not have been on hand to give them a satisfactory explanation. We cut several scenes and shot new ones. In the revised version the reactionary gang bought up chamber pots, clay statues for the garden and hats decorated with fake ostrich feathers. This did not hurt anyone's feeling and the movie was saved.

Long live Zhdanov and high-quality artistic production!

### Revai Vetoes Dery

By then, the plight of all those connected with the movie industry was fairly well-known, and life for the frogmen became increasingly difficult. Nothing but blunders and failures. It was almost impossible to get a writer to work for the studios. And when a writer agreed, the result usually was disaster. At that time, the prominent Communist author Tibor Dery had just completed a script based on the first part of his famous novel, *The Answer*. The title of the movie was to be *Balint Sets Off*, and everyone had high hopes for it. A topnotch director, Zoltan Fabry, had been assigned to the job. Suddenly, out of a clear sky, the blow fell. Jozsef Revai tore the novel to shreds in an extensive

article in *Szabad Nep*. He had strong objections to Balint's character, and especially to Dery's treatment of his youth. Revai called the novel "opinionated," "alien," "a bourgeois product." After this attack, adaptation to the screen was obviously ruled out.

### Country of Iron and Steel

THE TOP MEN of the movie industry were painfully aware that they had failed to produce the required movie on one of the great accomplishments of the Five Year Plan. Party chief Rakosi had recently declared that Hungary was a country of iron and steel, and that the main task of the propaganda machinery was to convey this concept to the people. Thus, novels were written about the blast furnaces at Diosgyor, molten steel was poured onto the stage (*Everyday Heroes* by Eva Mandi) and confusing images of iron works, boilers, coal mines, transmission belts and factory chimneys permeated daily life. While the nation was systematically whipped into worship of industrial power, and while the Party announced plans for huge installations, it took all of two years to enlarge a delicatessen on Rakoczi Street. And when a turret on one of the most beautiful palaces in Budapest was damaged, it took three years to erect a scaffold so that repairs could be carried out. Mountains were in labor and the product was a poor mouse.

The government had allotted two billion forint for the construction of a subway, and work had actually begun; at



The renowned actress Agi Meszaros, in a scene from *Menyhert Simon*, a film about life in the mountains. Mr. Halasz tells how this film, by the famous Hungarian writer Tibor Dery, who was to take a leading part in the Revolt, came to be made.

Photo from *Beke es Szabadag* (Budapest), December 22, 1954

<sup>6</sup> The tribulations of Gertler and Mr. Halasz in shooting *Clash in Peace* were described in the first installment of *Muse in Chains*.



Imre Sarkadi, above, who wrote *The Merry-go-round*, directed by Zoltan Fabry. Mr. Halasz tells why even such first-rate films as *The Merry-go-round*, right, were poorly received in the months before the Revolt.

Photo from *Hungary* (Budapest), No. 2-3, 1956



the same time, however, the Budapest streetcar tracks were in urgent need of repair, and possession of an old jalopy was an unattainable dream for the private individual. No needles were available, but we were called the country of steel. We were told that we lived under the best social and economic system in the world, but a gift package from the US was an object of wonder and admiration. People stared with amazement at the nylon products, ballpoint pens and fragrant soaps; merely to handle the products of "imperialism" was considered an honor. A person who received a pair of nylon socks as a gift felt like walking around without pants so that everyone could admire them. And a pack of American cigarettes sold under the counter for as much as the daily earnings of a white-collar worker.

### *Sztalinvaros Unvisited*

All this, however, is beside the point. A script was needed for a movie on one of the big projects of the Five Year Plan to show that we were truly a country of iron, steel and what not. Yet, despite its efforts, the studio was getting nowhere. The chief Five Year Plan project was clearly the Iron Works at Dunapentele, later called Sztalinvaros. Andras Sandor, a talented young playwright, had been commissioned to write a script describing the city's construction. Sandor was a logical choice for the job, since he and his family had been living in Sztalinvaros from the very beginning. Sandor worked for a local paper. "Who could be better qualified?" the people at the studio said. "After all, he really knows the place." Well, that was the trouble. Sandor knew Sztalinvaros too well.

He did not write what Revai and the studio management wanted to hear. He wrote about grave problems and insurmountable difficulties, about the workers' complete disillusionment and the management's haphazard methods and

insecurity. Sandor was an honorable man; today he is in prison, serving an eight-year sentence. They made him write his script over and over, but no matter what he wrote, it was not the cheerful showpiece the studio wanted. By then, it was clear that the job should be given to someone who had never been to Sztalinvaros.

Gabor Thurzo, a hack writer and opportunist, filled the bill; he would have accepted any kind of literary assignment to prove that he had broken completely with his devout Catholic past. He wrote the movie just the way he was ordered; *Tiny Penny* was a syrupy story studded with songs and accordion music. It took Thurzo nearly two years to get the script just the way they wanted it. Then they decided that it wasn't even necessary to film it at Sztalinvaros; everything could be done on the studio lots. A young man by the name of Hersko was appointed director and proved to be the source of further production delays. During his training in Moscow he had somehow been made to believe that the "Socialist" artist told only the truth. It was only after he had been dismissed as director that he understood the discrepancy between theory and practice.

The mining town of Komlo was the second most important project of the Five Year Plan. An author had been assigned to the topic and chose as his hero the man who had been responsible for building the town and who had risen from the rank of worker to a leading Party post. Unfortunately, by the time the manuscript was completed the creator of Komlo had been arrested as a swindler and "enemy of the people." That, of course, meant shelving the script.

### *"Under the City"*

The Budapest subway was the third great Plan project. The honor of writing a script on this topic was given to me.

My associates at the studio looked upon the job as hopeless. The worst of it was that the movie could not end with a triumphant display of "Socialist" achievement because not a single section of the subway had been completed. Aside from this, there was the problem of making the complicated techniques of construction understandable and interesting to the audience and, last but not least, creating dramatic tension that would overcome the monotonous setting of an underground maze. Everyone took the attitude that it might be done if . . . etc., etc. but that it was altogether impossible.

Nevertheless I agreed to tackle the job because I was intrigued by the subject. The idea of this formidable excavation had completely captured my imagination, and I decided to become acquainted with the process of construction and the people involved in it. I was given a permit to roam underground at will. After being given the same medical checkup as the engineers and workers on the project, I spent six solid months learning the intricate and thoroughly exciting techniques of tunneling, drilling, caisson lowering and deep construction. I spent most of my evenings with the workers, drinking cheap wine in a nearby bar. The deep construction worker has distinct characteristics, like the sailor or the pilot. His dangerous occupation leaves its mark on him.

Many of the engineers I met had ruined their health by spending so much time under high atmospheric pressure. The best of them had specialized in building bridges and the experience they had gained lowering pillars under water came in handy in their present work. The workers themselves came from very varied backgrounds: there were peasant boys who had come to the big city to escape collective farming; there was a barber who refused to work in the nationalized shops because of the low wages; there were former aristocrats and former criminals.

Gradually, the plot took shape, and it seemed to me that *Under the City* was the best writing I had ever done. I described the effect the long hours underground had on the various characters and how individuals became deeply involved with each other in the poorly lit, stifling tunnels. I showed the peasant boy looking for some meaning in his work, the hairdresser handling the compressed air hammer as if it were a hair dryer, the former pickpocket overcome by a desire to steal something and refraining at the last moment. I portrayed a hot-tempered engineer, and a cold, distant one, who believed only in figures. The climax of the story was a flood, resulting from a breakthrough; in the crucial moments, the characters of the various men became unmistakably clear, but their common suffering forged them into a solid unit. Needless to say, the script was free of the usual Party-inspired motives and clichés.

### Visions and Revisions

The script had to be approved by the following people: the head of the drama section; the studio art director; the drama committee composed of the studios' directors; the head of the Movie Department of the Ministry of People's Education; an art committee created by the Ministry; a so-called operations committee made up of deputies of the Ministry; the directors of the subway construction and the



In *The Bridge of Life*, made about a year before the Revolt, the writer Gyula Hay set out subtly to remind his audience of the failure of the Party's promises. Mr. Halasz worked with Hay on the film.

Photo from *Nok Lapja* (Budapest), January 19, 1956

Party organization for the project; and finally, Gyorgy Non and Jozsef Revai himself.

The script failed to win approval at its very first reading. Kovacs, the opportunistic head of the drama section, did not consider the conflict "authentic." He declared that the devoted engineer, the cold man of figures, would have to be made into an enemy of the people. Furthermore, the breakthrough could not be an accident; it would have to be an act of sabotage perpetrated by the engineer. We argued and argued; our excited voices could be heard all over the studio. I tried to be firm, but the pressure was too great. So I made the required revision.

The script then went to the studio art director, a certain Mrs. Pal Kemeny, former secretary to and trusted friend of Revai. "It's very interesting," she said, "but there aren't any right-wing Social Democrats in it, and in the present circumstances we cannot make a movie about workers without showing the danger of right-wing Social Democrats." I bowed to her orders. The next version went to the drama committee, which decided that the Party Secretary had to be given a larger role. I worked out a fourth version. This went to the head of the Movie Department of the Ministry of People's Education; he wanted more action by the Party organization—a Party Secretary, after all, could not carry out the work alone. I worked out a fifth version. The Art Committee objected that the script had ignored the fact that the walls of the various stations were to have frescoes. The importance of the subway to painters should be stressed. The sixth version went to the operations committee, which complained that the story failed to emphasize that the Hungarian subway was patterned on the Moscow subway. Soviet experience must not be disregarded. I worked out a seventh version.

The construction managers and the Party organization on the project demanded that certain technical processes be described more clearly and that modern methods be shown. This meant an eighth version. Gyorgy Non read the story and expressed his distaste for the whole thing; there were too many grim underground scenes. To counter-



act their effect, the script should include cheerful scenes on the surface. Perhaps the construction workers should take trips to the lovely hills surrounding Budapest. They could go by train up the Janos Mountains. I finished a ninth version, which was read by Jozsef Revai. The story was quite interesting, he said, but it was confusing and ordinary. I had tried to do too much—the right-wing Social Democrats, the hostile engineer, the Soviet line, excursions into the mountains, all these were superfluous and ruined an otherwise good plot. It would have to be rewritten completely.

The tenth version should have been closest to the spirit of the first—but by that time I was confused and worn out. The speeches, characters and various scenes no longer had any meaning for me. Indeed, the last version was by far the worst. Hersko, the young director, began shooting, and by the fall of 1953 the movie was completed.

On the day of the premiere, the government made a sudden announcement: work on the Budapest subway was to be stopped. And what about the movie? Unfortunately for me, it was a success. My skeptical engineer had declared in one scene: "I don't believe we can ever do it. It's too big a task, the product of a feverish mind. We don't have the strength it takes." The audience heard him and applauded wildly. I was never forgiven for these words.

### *The Post-Stalin Era*

**E**VENTFUL YEARS FOLLOWED. Stalin died, and in Hungary the Rakosi dictatorship—once believed to be as solid as Gibraltar—was shaken to its foundations. Or was

it? True, Imre Nagy had proclaimed a new course, but his plans and his program were short-lived. Before long, Rakosi repealed all the concessions he had been forced to make. Yet, despite this, the general atmosphere did improve. The truths proclaimed by Nagy survived—hid in office corners, in the winding corridors of public buildings, in the cracks of walls. No ideological spring-cleaning could root them out. Truth, like a faithful dog, cannot be banished; once it has found a home and affection, truth clings to its owner, despite occasional kicks.

In the end, Rakosi had to give ground. The men in charge of the nation's literary and intellectual life realized that somewhere and somehow they would have to loosen the reins. Jozsef Revai resigned from the post of Minister of People's Education, withdrawing from the foreground to control more discreetly backstage. He was succeeded by Jozsef Darvas, to whom nothing—neither honor nor conviction—was too high a price to pay for the privilege of sitting in the velvet ministerial chair. Darvas, formerly a writer of sorts, was a shrewd, petty man of mediocre abilities. Yet despite his cunning, his vanity made him an easy prey. Director Laszlo Ranody, an old friend of Darvas who had been shelved in the Revai era, went to see the new Minister as soon as he took office. "There is one great work in Hungarian literature," Ranody announced, "which absolutely must be made into a movie." "Which do you mean?" Darvas asked, a pleasant suspicion no doubt already welling in his breast. "*The Precipice* by Jozsef Darvas," Ranody said, without batting an eyelash. "Yes," Darvas agreed, "that's an excellent idea."



From *Under the City*, Mr. Halasz' picture on the construction of the ill-fated Budapest subway. The film was equally ill-fated; Mr. Halasz tells how he was forced to rewrite it some dozen times as every functionary in Budapest viewed his script with alarm.

Photo from *Beke es Szabadsag* (Budapest), December 16, 1953



Jozsef Darvas succeeded the Stalinist theoretician Jozsef Revai as Minister of People's Education, a position of top control in cultural life. In this post, Darvas did himself the honor of publishing his own novel, "The Precipice," and arranging that it be made into both a play and a film. For these splendid efforts, he awarded himself a 50,000 forint prize. Above, Darvas, with a scene from the stage version, left, and from the film.

Photo from Hungary (Budapest), Nov. 4, 1956

### A Darvas Revival

*The Precipice* was an early work. Although Darvas had almost forgotten what it was to write in his preoccupation with the joys of officialdom, he promptly set to work on a script. First, however, he arranged matters so that he would get an advance of 10,000 forint. After all, an artist can't produce while he is burdened with financial worries. By the time the script was completed with Ranody's co-operation, Darvas had received some 50,000 forint for the story. Besides this, he awarded himself a 50,000 forint Kossuth State Prize for literature. At the same time, the State Publishing Company saw how important it was to re-issue Darvas' novel, and publication provided the Minister with a little side income. It began to seem as if the new literary policy amounted to nothing so much as a revival of Darvas' works.

Ranody was also given a Kossuth Prize. To show his appreciation, he no sooner finished one Darvas script than he suggested that another Darvas work be adapted for the screen. A new, recently "discovered" starlet played the heroine in all the Darvas movies. She ascended to fame like a rocket. Only her husband failed to appreciate the distinction bestowed on her by the great Darvas; his marriage blasted, he committed suicide.

### Reconciliation With Authors

Yet Darvas could not write every movie script, and the Party tried to effect a reconciliation with authors whom it had previously offended. This was the period in which Ehrenburg's *The Thaw* was published in the Soviet Union, and when leaders of the Soviet movie industry began to admit that something was wrong with their past methods. They banished Gerassimov, recalled Donskoy,\* decided to favor the Italian neo-realist techniques of De Sica, Rossellini, etc., and to eliminate some of the bureaucratic procedures affecting the acceptance of scripts.

\* Famous silent film director, passed over in the Stalinist period.

In Hungary, the new policy meant, among other things, an attempt to enlist the services of Tibor Dery whose novel, *The Answer*, previously had been rejected for screen adaptation. Dery had just finished writing his fine short novel *The Birth of Menyhert Simon* and he was asked to forget about his difficulties in the past and to write the screen story. The book meant a great deal to him, and he agreed.

*The Birth of Menyhert Simon* was about the close companionship of mountain folk. Defying the wrath of the elements, in a blinding snow storm, over paths obliterated by drifts, the mountain people bring a doctor to a woman in labor. It was a truly moving work. Dery wrote the script and it was accepted without too much delay, but unfortunately it was directed so poorly that much of its greatness was lost.

### A Disillusioned Gyula Hay

Gyula Hay was the second author approached by the relenting literary officials. Hay began work on a script about shipyard workers that courageously pointed up corruption and unfair practices at the docks. Hay exposed the men who had set themselves above the workers, and depicted the burial of old dreams. Naturally, the script was rejected. But the Party did not want to offend Hay again, so it hit upon a shrewd idea. One of Hay's plays, *The Bridge of Life*, had been presented by the National Theater in 1951 and awarded the Kossuth Prize. The play was about the building of the Kossuth Bridge, the first construction over the Danube in the postwar era. It was a rather weak, standardized work crammed with Party ideology. Head of the drama section Kovacs asked Hay to adapt the play for the screen. It was a cunning offer, intended to remind Hay

A scene from Mr. Halasz' play *After the Storm*, dealing with the confused events of 1945. It passed the censorship, was staged in Budapest, and after one performance was inexplicably banned.

Photo from Szinhaz es Mozi (Budapest), April 1, 1955

of the time when he was very much in agreement with Party policy. I was assigned to Hay as a frogman and we started work on the script.

For me, it was an unforgettable experience. Hay was under no illusions about the Party's motives and its reasons for rejecting the script on shipyard workers. "How stupid they are," he said. "They ought to realize that this script will also show our bitter disappointment and the death of our dreams. We must evoke the atmosphere of 1945 in such a way as to shock the audience into remembering what the Party had once promised; people will then know how things should have turned out. A positive work? Oh, yes, it will be positive. The Party will be shown in a favorable light—only the time will be 1945. What they said then will expose their guilt now—for all that they have done and failed to do."

And this is what the script became.

Hay himself was an exceedingly complex personality. During the three months I worked with him, I came to understand the gripping tragedy of his life. Only a few people knew that Hay had had a son by his first marriage—a son who became a Catholic priest. He rejected all Communist efforts to enlist his cooperation in the "peace movement" or any other Party organization, and withdrew to his parish in a remote village. Moreover, he refused to have anything to do with his father.

Hay was a Communist of the old school and had spent many years abroad in Germany and the Soviet Union. When he left Hungary his son was only three years old. In 1945, after years of separation, their reunion was brief. "I shall pray for you," the young priest said to his father. He changed his name and did not respond to Hay's efforts for a reconciliation. As time went by, Hay's longing for his lost son became more and more acute. The boy's moth-

er had died, Hay had remarried, but time did not heal the wound. I am fully convinced that Hay's honest reappraisal of the past and his change of mind was greatly influenced by his desire to become worthy of his own son. I can't help but wonder about their relationship when Hay is freed from prison.

*The Bridge of Life* was completed and produced, but the movie was a dismal fiasco. By then the people were hardened skeptics who rejected everything that even faintly appeared to support the Party's views. Hay's methods of exposing the Party's failure were too subtle. The people were fed up with sign language: they wanted deeds, an open stand, unambiguous words. Yet honesty was difficult to come by. Although the censorship appeared to be relaxed and the Party had abolished six of the nine endorsements necessary for acceptance of a script, the three censorship bodies that remained were powerful enough to kill anything that did not fit the Party's line. And the things they killed were not limited to stories containing signs of forthright political opposition.

### "Song of the Forest"

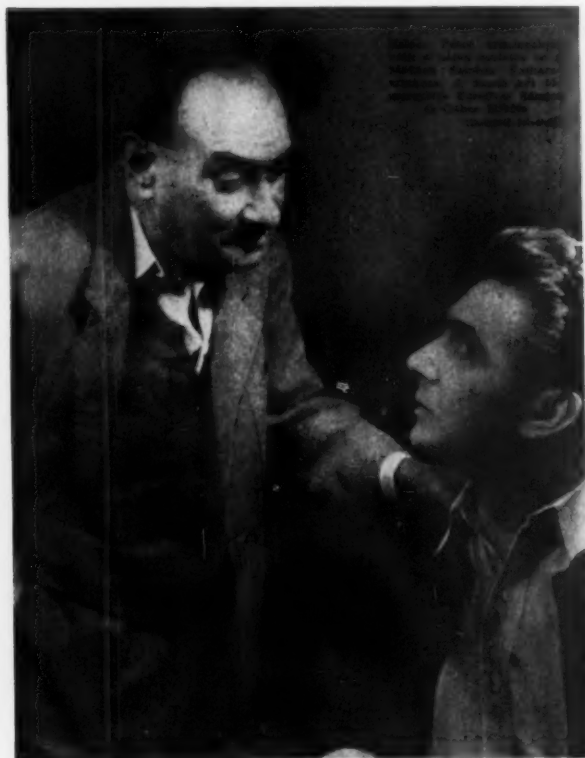
For instance, it was during this period that Sandor Torok, one of Hungary's outstanding authors and playwrights, was commissioned to write a screen story. Before the war, Torok—a humanist in the best sense of the word and a profoundly honorable man—had written several brilliant novels, and his plays were presented by the National Theater. After the Communist coup in 1948, however, he gradually withdrew from all literary work and became a reader for the State Publishing Company for Textbooks. When he was approached by the studio at the end of 1954, he offered a half-finished play called *Song of the Forest*, written as a musical and dealing with the simple but romantic life of lumberjacks.

Kossuth prizewinner Ferenc Farkas had almost finished the score for it and one of the theaters had accepted it and was waiting to start rehearsals. I was sent to review the play and recommended that it be accepted for screen adaptation. We set to work. This cheerful and delightful piece lent itself beautifully to screen treatment, and we were finished in a few weeks. The script was sent to the Ministry of Agriculture for approval. A few days later Andras Hegedus,\* then head of the Ministry, summoned us to his office. Although Hegedus is a dwarf-like man, he exuded so much authority squatting behind his enormous desk that he appeared positively formidable. He thundered angrily:

"No, no, no, comrades, a thousand times no. We can't possibly recommend this for the screen. Our enemies accuse us of ruthlessly stripping the forests and you want us to make a movie about lumberjacks felling trees? You must understand that the Hungarian People's Democracy does not fell trees; it plants them. Make a movie about the work of nurseries and describe how the Second Five Year

(Continued on page 56)

\* Hegedus was also First Deputy Premier; in 1955 he was promoted to Premier. During the Revolt, he fled in terror to the Soviet Union. According to unofficial reports, he recently returned to Hungary and is working in the Party library.





A House of Literary Creation (formerly a Hohenzollern mansion), at Sinaia. There are a number of such establishments in Romania, where Writers' Union members can go to work, free of charge. Such amenities and prerogatives are one of the methods by which the regime seeks to control its writers; the threat of the loss of pleasant facilities like this one acts to keep restive writers in line.

Photo from *Rumania Today* (Bucharest), February 1957

## *Romania's Literary Scene*

### *A Strategy of Evasion*

**I**N REACTING to Zhdanovist assaults on art and the individual, writers in the post-Stalin era have tended to adopt one of two techniques: either they have openly counter-attacked with charges and proposals of their own, thereby giving voice to wider popular resentment; or, concealing their discontent by a public show of compliance, they have quietly side-stepped strictures imposed on them and, by evading the essence of the Party's commands, have crippled its program.

In Romania, the latter method seems to have become almost a way of life among the intelligentsia over the past several years. At no time has the Gheorghiu-Dej leadership been rocked by direct, outspoken denunciations of Communist practice. Indeed, unlike the regimes in Poland and Hungary, the Romanian administration has managed to avoid such dangerous contingencies, and when, in 1956, one isolated author, Alexandru Jar, dared utter

what was officially denounced as "vile slanders," he was promptly dismissed from Party ranks.

This swift reprisal probably squashed any hopes for far-reaching liberalization the intelligentsia may have had, but in any event it seems unlikely that hopes ever were very high. As in Czechoslovakia, the prevailing attitude represented nothing so much as disbelief in the possibilities of "improving" the Communist system, or life under it, and aside from regime vigilance, this Schweik-like stance undoubtedly did much to inhibit open combat with the Party's stands. The post-Stalin relaxation however, did affect Romanian life and, to some extent, writers and artists took advantage of the somewhat milder censorship. In various fields of Romanian artistic endeavor there appeared a definite tendency to avoid the prerequisites of Party-mindedness; "Socialist realism" was not attacked—it was simply ignored.



While this attitude did not precipitate the kind of intellectual unrest that swept over Poland and Hungary in 1955 and 1956 and Bulgaria in 1957, it was not without its dangers to the Party. Last year, as part of a stiffening of official policy throughout the orbit, the Romanian leadership launched a campaign to liquidate "bourgeois symptoms" in art. Significantly, the Party met with little forthright resistance; writers and periodicals responded largely by reiterating their loyalty to Communist precepts and vied with each other in pro-Party displays. Nevertheless, the alacrity with which the intellectuals indulged in self-criticism was suspect, and beneath their avowals of repentance loomed the outlines of farce. Lacking the ring of sincerity, discussions on what constituted "Socialist" art seemed to amount to little more than a ritual.

### The Bourgeois Syndrome

WHAT SPECIFICALLY displeased the Party in literature was announced early in 1958. At a February 21-22 meeting of leaders of the Writers' Union, regime spokesman Paul Georgescu complained about the writers' escape from contemporary problems. Works describing agricultural collectivization and factory life, he said, had unfortunately decreased, while at the same time the market was flooded with historical novels. In poetry, symptoms of escape were equally acute, as could be seen from the use of "minor, non-political and timeless" themes. Georgescu charged that the evidence showed that intellectuals were "ideologically confused," and that their muddled outlook had opened the way to "bourgeois influences," promoted "underestimation of the present achievements of the working class," and resulted in a "noticeable revision of Leninist principles of Party-mindedness in literature."

Complaints of this sort were coupled with warnings to errant writers and periodicals that their misdeeds would not go unpunished. In an article on February 1, the Party daily *Scinteia* urged editors to be more scrupulous about the ideological content of literary works, and added pointedly that the literary fund was intended to ensure "favorable conditions" for those writers who "fulfill the spiritual necessity of our people." Similarly, an article by Georgescu in the Writers' Union weekly, *Gazeta Literara*, April 3, emphasized that membership in the Union was for individuals who "accepted and fought for" Marxist-Leninist principles: "Therefore, writers who are hostile to Socialist principles have no place in our ranks; [nor] should there be found in our ranks writers who, having in the past supported anti-democratic and fascist activity, maintain an equivocal or even hostile attitude and do not wish to show in any way that they are close to the working people."

### The Wayward Press

Subsequent press attacks on various examples of defective critical and creative work indicated that few Romanian writers fulfilled the Party's political expectations. The publications which most flagrantly ignored Party standards were those issued in Cluj—the weekly *Tribuna*, and the monthly *Steaua*. An intellectual center with a large Hungarian minority, Cluj (in NW Romania) was the seat of

reported student demonstrations at the time of the 1956 Revolt. Evidently, it has continued to be one of the main trouble spots in the country.

The Bucharest weekly *Contemporanul*, April 11, took *Tribuna* to task for its "contemplative, mystical and evasive poetry," written in "outdated modernist forms." In reply, *Tribuna*, May 19, accused the *Contemporanul* writer of besmirching the reputation of talented poets, and declared: "Let us greet with a condescending smile this voice aiming at conformity." Outraged by this response, *Gazeta Literara*, May 22, entered the fray. *Tribuna*, it said, was defending unprincipled stands, and its editor would do well to advise contributors that in the future he would refuse to print works whose content was "foreign to our position and our sentiments."

As for *Steaua*, it was attacked not only because of its "decadent" poetry but also because its editor, A. Baconsky, had expressed "extremely subjective and profoundly incorrect opinions" in support of the novelist Matei Caragiale, who died in 1936. According to *Scinteia*, April 26-27, Caragiale's novel, *Gentlemen of the Old School*, was "strange, morbid, false," and completely irrelevant to present-day life in Romania. *Scinteia* added that Baconsky's praise of Caragiale was typical of *Steaua's* policy of

Sînt unii care fac literatură proastă; e trist...



...Sînt alții care fac literatură și mai proastă; e grav!



An attack on heads of State publishing enterprises who permit the publication of work which fails to carry out the regime demands for "Socialist realism." Above, a novelist. "There are some producers who write badly; this is sad." Below, a publisher writing "accepted" on the manuscript. "There are others who permit such literature; this is serious."

Cartoon and quoted caption from *Gazeta Literara* (Bucharest), January 27, 1959

neglecting the principles of "Socialist realism" and advocating the so-called modern spirit.

### The Party Takes A Stand

Although such stabs at revising Party norms were insignificant when compared with the barrage of anti-Party criticism that had exploded in the press of Poland and Hungary, the Romanian regime had been forewarned by 1956 events in both those countries and inevitably viewed the trend away from "politics" and contemporary life as a serious sign of disaffection. Party leaders took a harsh stand against all symptoms of unorthodoxy, whether overt or passive, and embarked on a drive to force intellectuals into an active endorsement of official positions.

In May, the Central Committee's Department for Propaganda and Culture sponsored a conference on the "Struggle against Bourgeois Ideology," and, according to Agerpress, June 5, the participants—writers, playwrights, artists, educators, activists, etc.—voiced their determination to show militant opposition to alien ideas. The same note was sounded at a Party Central Committee Plenum, June 9-13, which stressed the need to "fight revisionism and all bourgeois ideological influences." In line with this policy of increased vigilance, the Party daily *Scinteia* reiterated previous complaints about the literary situation, and attacked, among others, the noted writer Geo Bogza for producing "atemporal poetry which could not stimulate the interest of young poets in the essential preoccupations of our time." (*Scinteia*, June 7, 1958.)

By July, the campaign was well underway. To further its program, the regime founded a new literary bimonthly, *Luceafarul*, dedicated to "literature of the present, Party literature, the literature of Socialist realism." And in a lengthy editorial entitled "For Strengthening Marxist-Leninist Adherence to Principles in Literary Criticism," *Scinteia* (July 18-19) listed by name writers, critics and periodicals whose attitude towards "Socialist realism" left much to be desired.\* The paper's main complaint was that Romanian literati had failed to take a definite Party stand, and had adopted a neutralist position in regard to "Marxist and no-Marxist literary standards." As could be expected from earlier broadsides, the Party's grievances included literary passivity, negativism, compromise, eclecticism and liberalism—sins linked with "bourgeois influences" and "revisionism."

Although *Scinteia* asserted that the Party had prevented the creation of a "cohesive revisionist trend" in Romania, it left no doubt about the dangers of such a trend, and declared that Romanian writers had emulated their colleagues elsewhere in the orbit in furthering revisionist attitudes under the pretext of a fight against "dogmatism." *Scinteia* remarked that until recently *Steaua* had declared that anyone who disagreed with "modernist opinions" was dogmatic.

As for other periodicals, *Scinteia* stated that for a long

\* The reproved writers included: A. Baconsky, S. Bratu, D. Salajan, A. Baranga, Al. Firu, A. Novac, I. Negoitescu, A. Martin, D. Micu and L. Raicu. Only a few writers were commended—notably, Paul Georgescu, M. Beniuc, N. Tertulian, M. Petroveanu, T. Mazilu, M. Ralea and S. Iosfescu.

time *Gazeta Literara* had printed criticism with a "wrong orientation," but of late had improved considerably; on the other hand, O. Crohmalniceanu, editor of *Viata Romaneasca*, was much to blame for allowing publication of the review's April 1958 issue which was an "anthology of false and harmful ideas in literary criticism." Despite these attacks, *Scinteia* assured its readers that the Party would continue to fight dogmatism, and called for a "patient and understanding attitude" towards "intellectuals of the older generation." These men, the paper said, must be "actively influenced" to reconsider their past work, and "helped" to master "Marxist-Leninist thought."

### Chorus of Penitents

THE PARTY PAPER'S article clearly was a signal for self-criticism, and a number of critics and periodicals immediately responded with pledges to improve their stand. Although not mentioned specifically by *Scinteia*, the weekly *Contemporarul* confessed that it had not always fought firmly enough against "liberalism, negativism, and conciliatory tendencies," and promised to adopt a more "vigi-



Front page of the first issue of *Luceafarul* (Bucharest), July 15, 1958. The paper, published by the Romanian Writers' Union, was designed to promote "Socialist realism," as the Prologue on the left states. At the bottom of the page is a poem by Mihai Beniuc, Writers' Union Secretary. The issue also contained a collection of Soviet poems, and an article entitled "Lenin and Gorki."



The poet Mihai Beniuc, Secretary of the Writers' Union. At a recent Union meeting he criticized a number of writers for failing to follow Party dictates with sufficient assiduity.  
Photo from *Rumania Today*, September 9, 1958

lant attitude." In its July 25 issue, the periodical gave evidence of its reform by accusing *Annals*, a review published by Bucharest's Parhon University, of failing to include studies on Soviet and Chinese literature, "studies against bourgeois and revisionist concepts. . . ."

In the same vein, O. Crohmalniceanu wrote a long article in *Viata Romineasca* confessing his responsibility for the review's shortcomings and conceding that too few articles opposed "foreign infiltrations." The editor agreed that *Viata Romineasca's* April issue, which had contained pieces by D. Micu and L. Raicu lacking "militant Marxist-Leninist criticism" and encouraging "aestheticism" and modernity, had reflected dangerous ideas. He also admitted that "volumes of verses . . . full of barren and anti-social individualism, such as the volume by Doina Salajan," had been reviewed by *Viata Romineasca* "in an unprincipled spirit":

"... Our press has fought against attempts of critics in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR [East Germany] and Yugoslavia to rehabilitate modernist currents. The attempt at a so-called 'renovation' of revolutionary literature by borrowing various modern artistic formulas from decadent contemporary production of the capitalist West has proved to be one of the principal revisionist theses in the matter of Socialist realism. . . . The poems of Polish writer Adam Wazyk have been an attack on Communism and an open plea for bourgeois anarchism. In Yugoslavia, surrealists who boast that they will create a 'true revolutionary poetry' are engaged in a mystical form of cultural backwardness and are producing a literature preoccupied with the occult, magic and esoteric, a literature without the slightest relation to the aspirations of the masses.

"Marxist literary criticism has no right to tolerate attempts to 'inoculate' Socialist realism with various 'modernist' innovations. As a result of its concessive attitude,

*Viata Romineasca* bears serious responsibility for the formalist and obscure deviations in the lyrics of many of our young poets, for the nebulous atmosphere of their verses, and for their estrangement from life and the acute problems of building Socialism. . . . We have also given evidence of indulgence by not vigorously combatting attempts to restore traditionalism. *Viata Romineasca* has not evaluated, using tenets of scientific Marxist analysis . . . the somber reactionary content . . . of nationalist literary currents of the past. . . ."

*Tribuna* also acknowledged the error of its ways and, on August 9, 1958, spoke of the "vacillating criticism" and signs of "atemporality, subjectivism, evasionism and nationalism" that had marred its pages. *Gazeta Literara*, August 14, 1958, contributed to *Tribuna's* "enlightenment" by criticizing the Cluj review's management of a literary contest allegedly initiated to "stimulate development of our literature of actuality." According to *Gazeta Literara*, *Tribuna* awarded prizes to works characterized by "non-actuality": "Schematic figures, tormented by bizarre moral tortures, are presented as modern heroes, and Socialist reality is reduced to a strange world, foreign to the interests of our readers." Referring to a story by Stefan Luca called "Six Place Settings" which had received third prize, *Gazeta Literara* commented: "The story . . . leaves the oddest impression of artificiality. The false psychological complications with which Stefan Luca burdens the hero also contribute to this effect. The hero suffers from the very defects which young Cluj prose writers consider the proper qualities and achievements of an artistic manner." *Gazeta Literara* concluded that it was wrong to award money intended to encourage works "inspired by the labor and victories of our people" to evasionist sketches and poems "devoid of actual message."

## Vigilance is The Watchword

Assertions of fidelity to "Socialist realism" and attacks on various works of fiction and non-fiction continued into the fall in what was clearly a Party drive to liquidate all non-conformist trends. One target of criticism was the 100th anniversary issue of *Steaua* (scheduled for June but issued later) which contained a preface by the "leading management of the Writers' Union" attesting to the periodical's faults. *Contemporanul*, October 10, 1958, found that even in its anniversary issue *Steaua* had perpetuated its errors and had made "ideological concessions"; and *Gazeta Literara*, October 16, concurred, mentioning specifically "depressing and nostalgic" poems by Baconsky, Ghurghianu and Felea (see below).

The Party, even as it sternly laid down its latest line, took pains to create the impression that the majority of writers had heeded its warnings; its chief complaint remained "evasionism" rather than "opposition," and its tone implied that it was confident that the writers would follow its injunctions docilely. That erring periodicals were mending their ways was suggested both by *Viata Romineasca*, Nov. 10, 1958, which commended *Steaua* for "contributing to the effort to create a Socialist realist literature permeated by the Party spirit," as well as by *Gazeta Literara* which stated on November 13, 1958, that *Viata Romineasca* had been "receptive to criticism" and had adopted the Party's militant line. The motives of both papers in issuing such praise may, of course, have been ambiguous, for it could have been aimed simultaneously at placating the Party and helping the periodicals in disgrace. In any event, the new Party periodical *Luceafarul*, January 1, 1959, adopted a more unforgiving and mistrustful attitude, but stated that the Party had everything under control:

"Unfortunately our literary activity [in 1958] gave rise to some isolated manifestations alien to the method of Socialist realism. With the help of the Party they were discovered in time. Modernist, aesthetical, conciliatory, eclectic objectivist tendencies aimed at paralyzing the Party and endorsing diversionist . . . theories about so-called peaceful coexistence between Marxist and bourgeois ideologies appeared in some pieces in *Gazeta Literara*, *Tribuna*, *Steaua*, *Utunk*, *Neue Literatur*, and especially in the No. 4 issue of *Viata Romineasca*, but *Scinteia's* July 18-19 editorial . . . dealt them a decisive blow."\*

Some of the official attempts to prove that the writers had lined up solidly behind the Party were connected with a campaign to force writers to observe practical life in factories and on farms. *Rominia Libera*, December 13, reported that the writers had responded enthusiastically and that a great many of them had "voluntarily extended their visits to villages to cooperate in cultural action, improve their acquaintance with the life of the working peasant and prepare for future literary work":

"The growing interest in (actual) life is destined to lead to the disappearance of our literary deficiencies. Only lack of ties with . . . the people can push some poets on the deceptive road of apoliticism and evasion, only restric-

\* *Utunk* is the Hungarian-language weekly published in Cluj. *Neue Literatur* is a German-language literary quarterly.

## "Grave Errors"

"THE NOISY STIRRINGS of revisionists of all kinds deserve only our total disdain. The slanderous attacks against the principles of Socialist realism at the recent Congress of Yugoslav writers . . . are ridiculous. . . .

"[In our own country] people like Lucian Blaga, who . . . has not yet declared himself and who is waiting for . . . acceptance of . . . his unfortunate profascist mysticism and ideological confusion, have their feet not on the ground but in absurdity. . . .

"Ana Novak, in her play 'What Kind of Man Are You?' let herself be influenced by ideas alien to the working class, ideas which grossly distort our revolutionary reality. Also Doina Salajan in her poetry made grave errors that have recently been criticized in our press. . . .

"Some young people began to look for a separate road. Books with dangerous contents appeared, such as *Zbateri* by Toma Spataru, as well as worthless works, such as *Paiate si Oameni* by Jozefini and Pintilie. Other erroneous books were written, [but were not published]. Such was the case of the novel *Casa cu 5 Fete* by F. Aderca, a book which the author himself confessed contained two chapters that were completely reprehensible and a big mistake. . . .

"The Party and the Writers' Union have always displayed a great deal of patience with Foldes, of the Cluj review *Utunk*. However, instead of accepting this aid in the proper spirit and helping writers, especially the young ones, to reflect in their works the Party line and spirit and to understand the problems of Socialist realism, instead of guiding them to actuality [realism], he did just the opposite.

"He is responsible, for instance, for the fact that the second volume of *Familia Gondosilor* by Gyula Szabo appeared in print. Instead of making it clear to this gifted writer that he wrote an erroneous book, Foldes on the contrary encouraged him and in his capacity as responsible editor of the ESPI [State Publishing House] in Cluj, edited it. It is known that this book is against the . . . development of collectivization and against the Party line. . . ."

Excerpts from Secretary Beniuc's report at the Romanian Writers' Union meeting. *Gazeta Literara*, Feb. 5, 1959.

tion to a limited universe leads to the blind alley of some dramatists . . . who invent subjects . . . and can't find the way to real contemporary problems."

A brief report later in the month on a plenary session of the Romanian Writers' Union also tended to minimize the writers' defection. No official mention was made of outbursts such as those which characterized a recent Polish Writers' Union meeting, and if any opposition was heard, the information was suppressed. According to *Scinteia*, January 30, the First Secretary of the Union, Mihai Beniuc, delivered a speech in which he stated, among other things, that the literary "successes" achieved in past years and which were "due first and foremost to the Party's guidance of literature" imposed responsible tasks on the writers.



Beniuc urged them to fulfill their pledges to create new works honoring the nation's fifteenth anniversary of "liberation," and said that the Union would give more sustained support to and take "greater care in" the development of young writers. *Scinteia* also reported that the discussions at the meeting centered on the writers' recent experiences among workers and peasants and their resolve to translate the inspiration thus gained into "works of a high artistic level."

Only later, on February 5, did the Party reveal that Union Secretary Beniuc had bitterly reproved a number of writers for falsely representing reality, spreading ideas alien to the working class and taking anti-Party attitudes on policy in the countryside. This information was carried by *Gazeta Literara*, which also revealed that the editorial boards of *Utunk*, *Steaua* and *Tribuna* had been attacked for propagating "harmful, chauvinistic and nationalist ideas." Among the writers criticized were the philosopher Lucian Blaga, the playwright Ana Novac, the poet Doina Salajan, and Toma Spataru and Gyula Szabo.\*

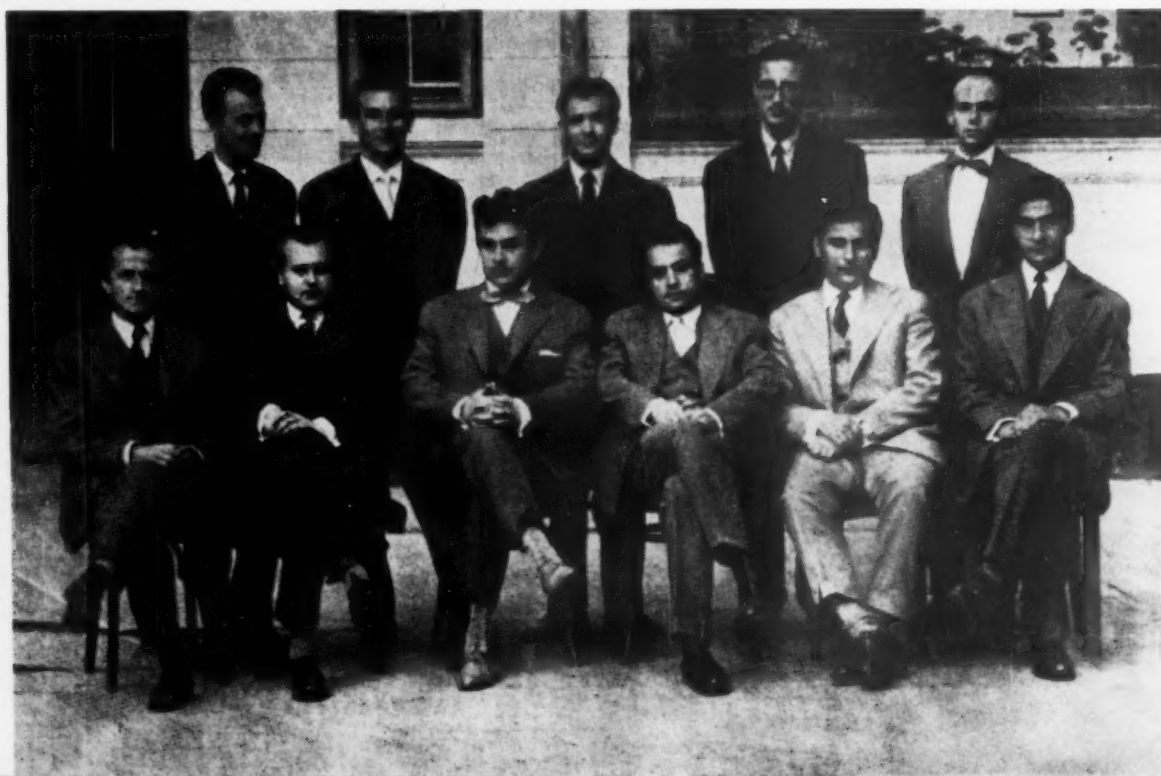
Because of intense censorship, it is difficult to know exactly what has happened in Romanian literary circles. In its campaign against "evasionism," the regime has exposed the errors of many critics, poets and periodicals, but at the same time has carefully avoided creating the impression that "evasionism" is espoused by any one par-

ticular group of authors or critics. No ringleaders have been singled out, and no "unrepentant" rebels have been acknowledged officially. The purpose of this policy is evidently to show that deviation, though insidiously dangerous, has not impaired Party control or given rise to an identifiable anti-Party clique.

Yet despite this reluctance to focus attention on an erring group, the regime has continually found it necessary to "criticize" the staffs of *Steaua*, *Tribuna* and *Utunk*. This attack confirms the fact that unrest in Cluj has been particularly acute, and that some of the strongest opposition has come from the Hungarian minority in Transylvania. In his speech to the Writers' Union, Beniuc partly acknowledged this when he demanded specifically that "Romanian, Hungarian and German writers living in Romania" struggle against "bourgeois tendencies." So far, however, the Party has not made a special point of deviation in Cluj. What it has done is to increase pressure on writers throughout the country. Thus, *Gazeta Literara* reported in its February 12 issue that the Writers' Union had established a special commission to inquire into "literary works now being written in honor of the fifteenth anniversary of the liberation [August 23], as well as works now in process of publication." The commission will report its findings to the Union's executive bureau, with the object of "rendering active assistance to writers who are producing works based on reality." Whether the writers will respond by producing the kind of works the regime wants, or whether they will obdurately persist in their "errors" under the camouflage of acquiescence, is to be seen.

\* L. Blaga, a non-Communist, has been criticized for his theory that art is a "revelation of mystery." Ana Novac and Doina Salajan have been attacked repeatedly in the regime press, the former for her play, "What Kind of Man Are You?" and the latter for a volume of verse for children.

A picture of the board of editors of the literary review *Steaua* (Cluj), which appeared in issue No. 100, 1958, of that journal. *Steaua* came under heavy regime criticism for printing apolitical and "escapist" work (the No. 100 issue was particularly attacked), and early in 1959 there were unsubstantiated Yugoslav reports that the editorial board had been reshuffled. Above, seated (left to right): Felea, Gurghianu, Baconsky, Rau, Busecan and Munteanu; Standing: Tomus, Popescu, Florea-Rariste, Tomuta and Neamtu.



*"For Whom Are They Written?"*

UNDER THE ABOVE TITLE, *Scinteia*, June 7, 1958, launched a bitter attack on the "apolitical" poetry published in the nation's literary periodicals. Referring specifically to the poems which appear below, *Scinteia* demanded that publishers stop giving space to works that did not correspond to the "spiritual requirements" of the people, rebuked literary critics for failing to combat "evasionist" tendencies, and announced that certain failure would be the lot of young poets who were content to "float among dreams," who concentrated on life's peripheral aspects and who forgot the artist's "civic responsibilities." As for the particular poems in question, *Scinteia* found them "banal," "ridiculous," "sterile" and without content:

"The literary publications have continually carried poems without a message . . . completely divorced from the preoccupations, sentiments and aspirations of the people. Such, for example, is Victor Felea's poem . . . 'Look, I've Come Back' which expresses a desire for communion with the soil, for merging oneself in trees and grass. . . . In *Tribuna*, Ion Manitiu pens a short poem which, although written in the spring, a season when insensitivity in a

young, optimistic soul is hard to imagine, tries to describe a completely banal kind of autumnal sadness. . . . Minor preoccupations, isolation from life and the work of the people, and a snobbish desire to imitate old-fashioned decadent poetry compels some poets to cultivate hermeticism and to use a ridiculous style, ridiculous because of its artificial and ungrammatical construction as can be seen in the poem "On the Shore." . . . Readers are justifiably amazed to find . . . under the name of a writer like Geo Bogza vague poems whose aim is to communicate moments of passive reverie, fugitive, superficial impressions, inspired by atemporal landscapes. Of such stuff is 'The Red Scarf' in which there appears for just a moment the vague figure of a girl 'with fair hair and a red scarf.' Though of more substance, 'Franck's Sonata' . . . does not offer a more profound message, but evokes sketches of landscapes. . . . The readers consider these rhymes to be episodic; they do not doubt that . . . Geo Bogza will give them new creations lit by the profound humanism and militant spirit that characterize his work and make him loved by . . . a large audience."

*Look, I've Come Back*

by Victor Felea

I now my head to you  
Can feel you under my feet  
Land, oh land,  
What a strong scent you have  
How deep is my joy to be with you.  
Look, I've come back  
To hold your grass, your trees,  
To hold your quietness,  
This invisible sea without waves  
On which some day I too will lose my way.

*Lyrics*

by Ion Manitiu

I can hear in myself the autumn  
I can hear it  
Feel it pulsing at my heart's door  
The foliage of trees is golden rust, the leaves are wet  
and I can feel the kiss of silver mist  
I can hear in myself the autumn  
I can hear it  
as it passes through green forests of the years—  
while Time, Time goes on flowing . . .  
I can hear in myself the autumn  
I can hear it. . . .  
I can hear in myself the autumn

and I listen  
to the echo of Spring outside—  
strange, longed-for Spring  
expected by me, unknowing, for such a long time  
Spring, coming now in the late evening hours . . .  
I can hear in myself the autumn  
and I listen  
to the echo of Spring outside . . .

I call to it, search for its love, I shout its name  
Coming late in evening on the shore . . .  
Night falls and it is cold  
Night settles in the corner of my eyes  
And from the shore I call its name  
Tucking its beloved image in my eyes.

I can hear in myself the autumn  
I can hear it  
Feel it pulsing at my heart's door  
I can hear in myself the autumn  
and I listen  
to Time, Time flowing.

*On the Shore*

by Petre Stoica

L YING ON THE shore like an elongated violin or, perhaps,  
like a blue branch  
Whose leaves my eyes have plucked. Here,  
On the sands as hot as the heart which has wished you to  
be like a leaf floating

In the purest movement of light, swept by my breath or,  
perhaps, by the undulating  
Sea which has recognized you, loving for two thousand  
years the amphora swept  
Ashore in its harbor.  
Your body, under this song, would become another song;  
your lips would provoke my tender nostalgia  
And the sunflower-shaped hat, lying at our feet, would  
evoke in silence the roads  
Of the plains, where I, child of stars, have looked at your  
poignant and natural mien,  
While the ears would recapture the frightened wiggling of  
lizards through scarlet grass.  
Here, on the shore, my eyes would rest by looking at you,  
remembering better  
The optimism of colors, the azure of the horizon, the yellow  
of your blouse thrown over  
The books, the orange of the sunset winding like a serpent  
through the waves. Woman,  
Always slow burning, I can decipher in myself impulses or  
a wish  
Never to exist in solitude, never to know the tormenting  
Silence of cathedrals. I dream of you on the shore,  
Where  
Your step may not yet have brought tears to the sterile  
sands—I dream of you  
Here: your voice would sound different, your song be  
higher  
And your elan would carry you high above my own. You,  
Woman, lying here on the shore like an elongated violin or,  
perhaps,  
Like the branch which my eyes have unclothed, vibrating  
under the caresses of the sea  
And under the caresses of my breath as I kiss you though  
in song,  
You awake the indifferent stone, the leaf swept in from  
afar,  
The boatman who sleeps in his boat mirrored in the sky.

### *The Red Scarf*

by *Geo Bogza*

IN THE FIELD full of thistle only this I saw,  
The red scarf.  
There was a maiden with fair hair  
And a red scarf  
In the field full of thistle only this I saw,  
The red scarf.  
There was a maiden with beads around her neck  
And a red scarf.  
In the whole of Dobrudja only this I saw,  
The red scarf.

### *Franck's Sonata* by *Geo Bogza*

THE WIND BLEW spring in from the south  
White sail boats passed on the open sea  
Cranes heralded the season with long cries  
And we listened to Franck's Sonata.

The moon rose from the sea waters  
Far away a mast swung  
The moon wove a golden sea bridge  
And we listened to Franck's Sonata.

Lovers in ecstasy on the long dike  
Looked at the waves as they rose and broke,  
Lovers in ecstasy dreamed, eyes on the sea,  
And we listened to Franck's Sonata.

The wind blew autumn in from the north  
Black sail boats passed on the open sea  
Cranes announced the season with long cries  
And we listened to Franck's Sonata.

### *Late Hour* by *Aurel Ghurghianu*

AS I PASS alone through town  
The large gardens seem to come at me,  
Under the wind-rocked bulbs of lamp posts,  
In the elusive lights that disappear like golden spiders.  
Is it witchcraft or the night itself which makes me dizzy?  
Enormously elongated,  
The shadows of trees  
Swing back and forth but cannot talk.  
Only the tremor of their foliage spreads its crown  
Under the steps of the late passerby  
Who, dreaming, crosses the town's streets.  
Beyond the fence, white lilac glimmers in the night  
And in its sleep throws off a bitter-sweetness  
To wander all night long like the passersby.  
I, too, would like to scatter myself.  
Like the perfume of white lilac  
Giving myself generously to the time I live in.

### *Destiny* by *A. E. Baconsky*

I AM BEGINNING to forget my name in this world  
Like the wind which forgets its wings on the fields  
And departs in evening naked and unseen,  
Alone on his return road.  
I am beginning to forget my very self  
My soul, my sorrows, my love—  
I forget them all in the places I pass, leave them all  
To people who, like so many jewels, I can use no more.  
And when I no longer know who I am,  
I shall fall asleep on the ground, my face towards the stars  
To dream about those who will follow in my steps and own  
From beginning to end the path of my wandering.

(*Sources*: "Late Hour" from *Steaua*, No. 100, 1958; "Destiny" from *Steaua*, No. 100, 1958; "Franck's Sonata" from *Viata Romineasca*, No. 4, April 1958; "Look, I've Come Back" from *Steaua*, January 1958; "The Red Scarf" from *Viata Romineasca*, No. 3, March 1958; "Lyrics" from *Tribuna*, April 5, 1958; and "On the Shore" from *Steaua*, February 1958.)



Janos Szabo (with rifle), one of the leading figures in the Budapest workers' councils during the Revolt. Known as Uncle Szabo, he played a heroic part in the uprising. He was executed January 19, 1957.

## AN EYEWITNESS REPORT:

# How the Workers' Councils Fought Kadar

*This is a first-hand account of the Hungarian workers' councils continued resistance to the Soviets and their puppet Janos Kadar, and the destruction of the councils by terror. The author was a member of the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest, who eventually escaped to the West. A history of the Hungarian workers' councils appeared in the March 1959 issue.*

**A**FTER THE SOVIET ATTACK on November 4, the workers' councils stood firm. They gave whatever assistance they could to the Freedom Fighters, and at the same time worked to consolidate their ranks. The local councils in the Budapest area got together and set up the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest with headquarters in Akacfa Street.

The first meeting took place on November 12 with 600 members elected by their constituent plants and factories. It soon became evident that such a large body was cumbersome, especially when quick decisions had to be made and action taken. A 60-member managing board was therefore set up, headed by a 3-member Executive Committee. President of the Executive Committee was Sandor Racz, a

young worker hardly 30 years old, who represented the Baloianisz factory.

Sandor Racz was one of the most outstanding figures of the younger generation of workers. He was broad-minded, well-educated, and possessed enough self-control to remain calm and composed under all circumstances. He knew the responsibility that his office entailed. At that time the workers' councils had great power, and Racz fully realized that any of his actions might have important consequences. He fought for the Revolution with all his heart, and was catapulted almost overnight into a leading political position. Just as the whole Revolt was dominated by a remarkable political instinct, so were the acts of Sandor Racz governed by the shrewd insight of the instinctive politician.



The two other members of the Executive Committee were Sandor Bali and Sandor Karsai. Bali was the delegate of the workers of the Standard Factory. A man of about 40, highly intelligent, he may not have been quite as active as Racz but his soft-spoken, well-considered statements always touched the essence of any problem. He was a personality who commanded respect. Sandor Karsai, delegate from the Tenth District Workers' Council, was the only intellectual—that is to say, non-laborer—in the Central Workers' Council. He had been picked by the workers as their representative in this hour of need because his devotion to the principles of democracy was known to all.

### The Six Conditions

**T**HE FIRST MEETING of the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest took place immediately after the very conciliatory speech by Kadar on November 11, in which he had attacked the mistakes of the past and promised many reforms. All 600 members were present. Outside, Soviet tanks rumbled through the streets, opening fire at the slightest excuse, and going to the meeting was therefore a dangerous venture. Yet all had come, being aware of the responsibility which their election had imposed upon them. It was a solemn meeting, at which the members behaved calmly and with dignity befitting the occasion.

Sandor Racz addressed the meeting, stating its purpose and presenting a list of conditions under which the workers would agree to return to their jobs:

1. Return of Imre Nagy to the Government;
2. An immediate halt to deportations, and the return of those already taken away;
3. Withdrawal of Soviet troops by an agreed date;
4. Guarantees of national sovereignty and independence;
5. Revision of Soviet-Hungarian trade agreements, and the exploitation of Hungary's uranium ore in the Hungarian national interest;
6. Recognition of the workers' councils.

The 600 council members unanimously accepted these points and authorized the executive committee to start talks with Janos Kadar. The only stipulation was that a report be made at the end of the talks.

Accordingly, the talks began. Though Janos Kadar at that time called himself "Chairman of the Revolutionary Worker-Peasant Government," he was in fact completely powerless. He was surrounded by a few Stalinists. The ministries and the administration did not function, and he had no police force at his disposal. Most of the police had joined the Revolt, the army had been partly disarmed by the Soviets, and the security police were either gathered at the Soviet headquarters, where they served mainly as informers, or hiding in the hills from the wrath of the people. Kadar could rely only on Soviet military power, the Soviet secret police and the few Muscovite Hungarians around him. He wanted to speak to Racz personally, so he sent word asking him to come to the Parliament Building. In those days the building was surrounded by a double cordon of Soviet tanks and troops. Entrance was possible only if

someone came from inside to fetch the visitor.

Racz and his companions were kept waiting for several hours before Kadar saw them. He was surrounded by unknown people, never heard of before, and the place was full of men wearing Soviet uniforms. Looking nervous and exhausted, he stared at the visitors with a vacant expression. Racz presented the six demands of the workers. Kadar interrupted him and asked impatiently when the workers were going back to their jobs. Racz calmly replied that they would return when their demands were met. The only result of the meeting was a recognition of the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest as representative of all the workers' councils in Hungary.

The 600 council members waited for the return of the delegation. Racz reported what had happened in a calm, objective manner. Then he added that he was convinced Kadar was only playing for time. He would be willing to parley only until he had managed to consolidate his power, and then he would begin to use force. The duty of the council, he concluded, was to keep trying for an agreement and to seek the greatest possible measure of rights for the workers. The delegates finally decided to continue their strike as the only weapon with which they could defend their rights.

There were further talks between Kadar and the representatives of the Council, but on each occasion Kadar became colder and more relentless, each time withdrawing some of his previous concessions. Simultaneously he launched a two-pronged attack on the workers' councils. First he reinstated the former Communist factory managers who had been swept away at the beginning of the Revolt, thereby re-establishing the bureaucratic dominance of the ministries. Then he organized so-called "officer details." This was a new sort of police force, composed primarily of former AVH (security police) members. They were required to take an oath and were given new uniforms. Many former Party Secretaries and similar Communist functionaries also donned this uniform.

### The Power of the Council

**D**URING THESE DAYS the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest was the only functioning organ of government that was accessible to the people. Consequently thousands and thousands approached it for information, advice and instructions. Members of the Council were on duty at all times, trying to solve problems, attending to the needs of the people. They worked completely on their own, relying on their own judgment and trying to do their best for those who came to them for help. The most important problems were handled by the Executive Committee, but the final decision rested in the Council. The strike could be maintained only if the workers had funds to live on. Therefore the Council instructed its branches to draw money from the National Bank and pay the wages of the workers. Kadar knew that if he could stop the Bank from making these payments he could break the strike. He managed to get control of the Bank but was not yet strong enough to dare refuse the payments.

Meanwhile, talks between Kadar and the Council rep-

representatives continued. The course of the talks was not unrelated to certain measures taken by the Council toward partially stopping the strike. By agreeing to resume bus transportation, the Council proved its power and influence over the workers at a time when Kadar and his regime had no power at all. Their admonitions fell on deaf ears, but when the Council issued the word, bus transportation was resumed in Budapest. However, soon afterward it was learned that Kadar had arrested the workers' council of the bus drivers.

The news spread with amazing speed. Soon all the drivers and maintenance workers knew about it. The buses stopped, the passengers were requested to get off, and the empty buses returned to the depot one after the other. The regime was shocked by the prompt reaction and the evidence of an efficiently functioning organization. Kadar thought he was strong enough by then to use force. Soviet troops were dispatched to the bus depot to compel the drivers to bring their buses out. But when the troops arrived the drivers suddenly found all kinds of trouble with the engines, and most of them disappeared under the hoods. Some of the employees began talking with the soldiers. Liquor was produced. By the time the soldiers realized what was happening, not a single driver was to be found. Even the employees who had been talking with them managed to disappear into thin air. The buses did not go out.

Kadar tried in the same way to put the factories into operation. Soviet troops were sent to a large factory in Csepel (a district of Budapest) and tried for days to get the workers back to their jobs. There was something wrong with every single machine, and there were no spare parts or material for repairs. Finally the troops realized the futility of their efforts and left. The factory remained idle. Another Soviet detail, under a Lt. Colonel, was sent to a factory in Pestszentlorinc (another district of Budapest). The Colonel summoned the workers' council of the factory and ordered them to resume work. Some of the council members spoke Russian and were able to state their case in a convincing manner. In fact, they managed to persuade the Soviet officer of the justice of their position so that he gave up the attempt. The Soviet soldiers were most surprised at being confronted everywhere by the workers themselves.

I shall never forget one dramatic scene. The Workers' Council of Greater Budapest was in session one day when we suddenly heard the roar of engines and saw cars stop in front of the building. A group of armed Soviet troops rushed into the room where we were meeting and covered us with their machine guns. As though by common agreement, nobody paid any attention to the soldiers. The meeting went on as if nothing had happened. The calm was awesome, expressing the profound contempt for Soviet soldiers which had been characteristic of the whole Revolt. The Council's attitude toward the insulting intrusion did not fail to impress the soldiers. They slowly lowered their guns. One of the Secretaries of the Council went to the telephone and called Kadar to protest the insult. In a little while the Soviet soldiers straggled out of the room. Before long a representative from Kadar arrived to express regret at the incident, explaining that it had occurred in re-

sponse to reports reaching Soviet headquarters that arms were being distributed at the meeting.

## Terror and Hunger

TALKS STILL WENT ON between Kadar and Sandor Racz. Despite lack of agreement, the Council agreed to a partial resumption of work in hope of winning some concession from Kadar. Then, early in December, Kadar started arresting intellectuals who were known to have participated in the Revolt. The Council, in a sharply worded note, declared complete solidarity with the intellectuals and protested their arrest. On December 5 the Revolutionary Committee of the Intellectuals gave Krishna Menon, India's delegate to the UN Security Council, a memorandum containing a proposal for a compromise solution of the Hungarian question. Mr. Menon requested that the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest consider the memorandum and, if it approved, countersign the document and forward it to him. Shortly afterward Kadar sent word to Racz, Bali and Karsai to come see him for the purpose of discussion. As they entered the Parliament Building they were surrounded by armed men and arrested.

When the workers of the Standard Factory learned that Sandor Bali had been held, they called a protest meeting to demand that he be released. The Communists sent a detail of the recently-established police force to the factory to break up the meeting. When they got there they were surrounded by a group of workers, who demanded that they leave. These new servants of terror then attempted to use force, but workers with arms appeared on the scene and ordered them away. A whole battalion of policemen arrived in support of their comrades. But by that time several hundred armed workers were present, and the police were told to leave the factory premises immediately or the workers would open fire. The police then withdrew to a nearby vacant lot, from which they observed developments. The meeting went on for hours afterward, with the workers bitterly protesting the arrest of their representatives.

When the Workers' Council of Greater Budapest learned of the arrest of Racz and his associates, it ordered a general strike. Working all night, volunteers typed and mimeographed the strike manifesto. Work stopped almost everywhere, in all the plants, factories and mines, except for those operations essential to the life of the population. The Kadar regime was utterly helpless in the face of this united stand. A general strike of such overwhelming proportions, bringing practically all the life of the country to a standstill, is possible only in a nation so terrorized that every worker is an enemy of the State.

However, under the increasing terror and pressure of the regime, the strike gradually lost momentum. The leaders of the various workers' councils were arrested one after the other, and even less important members were jailed. Some of the leaders were executed. This marked the beginning of a sustained attack on members of the councils. The members had been elected by the workers and were obviously their most trusted representatives. The Communists thought that if these trusted representatives were eliminated the workers would have lost their leaders, and without

leaders they would soon become compliant subjects of the Communist Party. Kadar's power had grown and the National Bank now followed his instructions, which meant that no more funds were advanced to pay the wages of striking workers. The workers and their families were faced with starvation. Those of their leaders who were still free fled across the border into Yugoslavia. The road to the West was already tightly sealed, and it was feared that this last escape route would also soon be closed.

To replace the leaders elected by the workers, the Communists forced their own men on the workers' councils. The workers lacked power to resist openly, but they did not give up completely; from their own ranks they elected a new, secret leadership which directed a passive resistance. In consequence the Kadar regime was unable to restore production to its former level for more than a year. How-

ever, work was resumed, though slowly and reluctantly. The Kadar regime restored the old centralized bureaucracy. Factory managers removed during the Revolt returned to their former jobs. The ministries and other offices of administration regained their old power, supported by the Soviet army, the newly established officers' corps and the secret police. The prisons were filled, new internment camps were opened, and a ruthless persecution began of those who had taken part in the Revolt. A "workers' militia" was formed, of former AVH (security police) members, to spy on the workers even outside the factory. The militia became the Party's army.

In this way the open resistance of the workers, led by the workers' councils, became a silent resistance of the people and lasted for a whole year. Even now it has not been entirely broken.

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## Chinese Communes—Yesterday and Today:

THE YUGOSLAV PRESS continues to be grimly amused by the ideological convolutions of China's "great leap forward," which was first proclaimed to have carried almost to the promised land of "pure Communism," a proclamation followed by muttered denials and disavowals. The Yugoslav Party paper *Borba* (Belgrade), February 15, carried an account by a correspondent in China entitled "Yesterday and Today," which said in part:

"PEIPING—WHEN the communes were organized, the most unheard of possibilities were ascribed to them. When they were set up throughout the country in the very short time of only two months this was interpreted as a result of the enthusiasm of the peasants and their 'unprecedented increase of Communist ideological consciousness.' And when the communes started to operate, much praise was expressed in a flood of articles and authoritative statements.

"It seemed that there were no problems in them at all. According to the press, everybody in the communes was happy and smiling. With the introduction of the system of so-called free supply of foodstuffs to the population it was stressed that the age-old dream of the Chinese peasant had come true, so that now he was only concerned with working better and with producing as much as possible for what he was given.

"If there was any doubt that 'the liquidation of the last remnants of private ownership' in communes was such a simple and painless thing, such theoretical suspicions were denied with statements about the 'high Communist conscience of the peasantry.' If it was thought that some problems might crop up, for example from the association of rich and poor collectives and the equalization of their members on the same, lower level, then it was explained, even in the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the establishment of communes, that various liabilities and assets of collectives would be liquidated by acting 'in the spirit of Communism' and 'not by starting to skin a flint.'

"All this, therefore, seemed to have been solved in a

satisfactory way. That is, until yesterday. Today we hear something else. Let us begin with the above-mentioned conscience of the masses of peasants. For reasons which we shall see later, and which practice and life have unavoidably placed on the agenda, it is admitted today that the number of progressive, very [politically] conscious peasants is very small; that there are still some, although not many, very backward peasants; and that the majority is somewhere in the middle. This fact underlined the need to 'raise the Socialist and Communist conscience of peasants.'

"And whereas it was previously claimed that one should not fear a decrease of work activity in a system having a secure supply of foodstuffs, it is now admitted that 'there are people' who consider it is 'all the same whether one works or not.'

"While we are mentioning the reward for efforts invested, let us mention that there are some problems in this too. Until recently it was stressed publicly and officially that the introduction of the system of reward 'partly in cash and partly in kind' in communes had been generally approved, and that the 'part in kind' should be increased at the expense of the 'part in cash'—which meant the near-liquidation of the principle 'to each according to his work' and led to virtually full equalization, which was said to be the beginning of Communism.

"Now it is said that 'people are not quite satisfied with full equalization.' For in this way the living standard of peasant families with only a smaller number of working members has been increased while for the great number of peasant families with a greater number of members who can work, the living standard has been increased very little or even reduced.

"Because of such manifestations, it is now alleged, in contradistinction to previous praises, that the payment by 'supply in kind' should not be increased at the expense of the part given in money, that six to eight grades should be introduced for payment in money according to the work performed, that the highest category of wages can be as much as four times higher than the lowest category, that the tendency of 'full equalization' which had until recently been introduced in communes was in general wrong and 'unsuitable for the development of production.'

## *A One-Way Street:*

# *Czechoslovak Cultural Relations*

*On every possible occasion Soviet and Satellite leaders speak of expanding "cultural relations," pointing to this desire as one more proof of their peaceful intentions. "We must learn from each other, we must know each other better," is their constant refrain. Within these countries, however, it is a different story. A particularly candid survey of what is really intended by these exchanges appeared in Vysoka Skola (Prague), Jan. 1959. It was written by a real expert, no less than Dr. Ludek Holubek, Chief of the Division for Relations with Foreign Countries in the Ministry of Education and Culture. What he says should be carefully read by every person in the Free World.*

RELATIONS between our institutions of higher learning and foreign countries increased substantially in 1958. Relatively ambitious plans for teacher and student exchanges with the People's Democracies were carried out, and a great many of our experts took part in scientific congresses in the Soviet Union and the People's Democratic countries. Some of our foremost scientific workers participated in scientific congresses and study tours in Western capitalist countries. Scores of teachers were able to attend the Brussels World Fair. We also sent groups of young teachers of the Linguistics Departments to France and Great Britain for summer courses. Considerable progress was made, in the course of direct cooperation with foreign institutions of higher learning in solving scientific and pedagogic problems, in exchanging information and materials. . . .

With respect to the Soviet Union we succeeded in substantially increasing our participation in Soviet scientific congresses, and it is particularly gratifying that, along with our older more experienced scientists, young scholars also participated. Several colleges undertook a direct exchange of experts with counterpart schools in the Soviet Union. However, the number of such exchanges is not yet sufficient. . . .

### *Relations With "Socialist" Countries*

THE EXCHANGE of teachers and students with the European People's Democracies was quite extensive. By the end of October a total of 4,439 students had taken part in



*"Among language students at present [in Czechoslovakia] is the son of the Foreign Minister of Nepal. He will study engineering." Czechoslovak Life (Prague), April 1957*

group tours and, in addition, 197 teachers went to study abroad at their own expense. Hundreds of educational experts took part in scientific congresses and sessions or visited Peoples' Democratic countries by invitation. If we add the considerable number of teachers who were sent as part of existing cultural agreements, the total is quite impressive. . . .

It is regrettable that at some institutions of higher learning we conceive relations with foreign countries only in terms of journeys to these countries. The comrades show little interest in other forms of cooperation—exchange of publications, scientific papers, pedagogic information, etc. . . .

We tried, as far as possible, given the currency situation, to send to Western capitalist countries primarily those educators who urgently needed such trips for their scientific work. Despite many difficulties, it was possible to work out a number of such study tours. We have also been able to send delegates to the more important international scientific congresses. It appears that in this matter we have been overly cautious in the preparation of our plan. We determined the number of congresses to be attended and the number of participants to be sent in exact accordance with the amount of funds available. But in the course of the year some congresses were cancelled, some participants changed their minds and, in the end, part of the funds were left over. Of course they were also used, but a bolder plan would have enabled us to attend, in the first half year, some important congresses which had been excluded. . . .



It is gratifying to note that the transfer to the participants of a substantial part of the costs of trips to foreign countries and the introduction of partial contributions to some study tours, have been received with great understanding at the institutions of higher learning. This measure has made it possible to increase the number of journeys to foreign countries. It must be said, however, that assistant professors and instructors had much more understanding for the matter than many full professors and even officers of the schools, although their better financial status should have produced a different result.

Several schools arranged scientific conferences with foreign participation. The results were favorable throughout and the foreign guests took away with them, together with new expert knowledge, pleasant remembrances of Czechoslovakia, and admiration for the beauties of our country and for the results of the Socialist building of our people.

The resolutions of the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia are the basic directives for the foreign relations of our colleges in 1959, as indeed they are for all sectors. We shall base ourselves on the principles of our Czechoslovak foreign policy and endeavor to make our work an effective component of Czechoslovakia's efforts to strengthen the Socialist camp, to enhance the progressive forces throughout the world and to preserve peace. At the same time, we will see to it that the foreign relations of our colleges adequately support the political and educational activities of the Communist Party and of the State organs. In accordance with the Congress directives, we will increase our political and ideological demands in the evaluation of every foreign operation, so that anything we organize shall by its contents and methods, have distinct Socialist character.

We will again place special emphasis on intensifying relations with the institutions of higher learning in the Soviet Union. As in former years, we shall send and receive considerable numbers of college teachers to lecture and study at various departments. . . . We will support direct friend-



Foreign students in Czechoslovakia. Caption, in the English-language propaganda magazine *Czechoslovak Life* (Prague), April 1957, reads: "Students of many races, but they quickly settle down to the, at first, strange Czech dishes. Here they have Viennese steak and Czech dumplings."

ship and cooperation agreements between our colleges and those of the Soviet Union. In doing so, we must remember that the relations with the colleges of the Soviet Union cannot be restricted to cooperating only with institutions in Moscow and Leningrad. . . .

Checkup has revealed that some colleges have submitted faked plans for tours to the Ministry, in reality sending students on pleasure trips. Such behavior must be condemned because the irresponsibility and lack of discipline on the part of some officers of the institutions might discredit the entire useful and successful operation. It is up to the presidents and deans of colleges personally to supervise the preparation of the exchanges and to prevent any attempt to abuse them.

### *Relations with Asia, Africa*

IN OUR RELATIONS with the Eastern countries of the so-called peace zone, we also count on receiving in the future a large number of students so that we may assist these awakening nations in the training of their own technical intelligentsia. Receiving and training students is, in our opinion, of utmost importance in the whole sphere of our cultural relations with the countries of Asia and Africa. The work with scholarship holders from the Eastern countries involves many political and pedagogical problems. We want to induce closer cooperation by the more experienced members of the faculties in the solution of these problems. An institution for the training of foreign students will be established at the Charles University which will become a center for solving such questions.

In its consultative body, the politically and professionally most experienced people should meet to consider and evaluate methods of instruction, political work, and ways and means to influence the cultural and social life of the foreign students in our country. The organizations of the Czechoslovak Youth League also have a responsible task in caring for the foreign students. We want our foreign guests to return to their countries not only as outstanding experts, but also as Czechoslovakia's dedicated friends and adherents of Socialist ideas. To attain this object it is necessary to create an adequate milieu and atmosphere, and this can be done only by the League's organizations, which should indeed devote utmost attention and care to, and gain influence over, the foreign students.

Czechoslovakia's economic and political relations with the countries of Asia and Africa are constantly growing. Development of cultural and scientific relations must accompany this growth. Justified criticism has frequently been voiced that cooperation in the field of science is not being developed at the required pace. We expect our colleges to use every opportunity to establish contacts with the institutions of the Asian and African countries, to exchange scientific material, information and political messages with them. . . .

### *Relations with West*

IN OUR RELATIONS with the Western capitalist countries, our principles remain unchanged. We are endeavoring to increase the possibility of mutual cooperation and the

exchange of knowledge. We hold that peaceful competition in the sphere of science, exchange of opinions and ideas can only be to the benefit of all nations. However, in no case will we permit the abuse of cultural and scientific relations for organized penetration of a foreign ideology into our country, as is being attempted by propaganda organs of some countries, particularly those of the United States. In 1959 we will again send our delegates to important scientific congresses of international organizations and to more important national scientific sessions. In so doing, we will give preference to those occasions which offer technicians and pure scientists an opportunity to appear at and to acquire knowledge from international functions. We will send a group of young philologists to France and Great Britain for summer courses. Within the limits of our currency supplies, we will make it possible for our scientists to undertake study tours of Western countries, if such tours are indispensable for their further work. We will arrange an official exchange with some countries for lecturing by several full and assistant professors. In this aspect we will pay particular attention to the development of cooperation with the scientific institutions of Austria and the Scandinavian countries. . . .

Naturally, scientists and educators who are sent to foreign countries not only have the task of representing Czechoslovak science but also the social system of our country. This means spreading Socialism in discussions and conversations, showing the advantages of our system with facts, informing on conditions in our colleges and scientific institutions, taking the offensive in debates. It means supplying suggestions to the scientists of capitalist countries for serious reflection on problems concerning social systems and awakening their conscience to an active fight against war. In contacts with scientists in countries neighboring

on the German Federal Republic, it means an endeavor to reveal the revanchist tendencies [of the West German Government] and to create a common platform against the danger of a restoration of Fascism and the threat of warlike aggression in the German Federal Republic.

In some countries, especially in the USA, they use the scientists in an organized manner to establish contacts with scientists and educators in the Peoples' Democratic countries, and thus they try to create a channel for the infusion of a foreign ideology into the countries of the Socialist camp. US propaganda organs richly subsidize the sending of various political materials to addresses of scientists, offering various advantages, inviting scientists to America, etc. In view of these efforts, we can only repeat the basic principle of our work: We are for every useful and honest development of relations; however, we will not permit their abuse. It is a matter of national honor for Czech and Slovak people to answer such efforts correctly and to turn the weapons of ideological struggle against the imperialists.

The truth of science and the logic of human history is on our side. We are, therefore, not afraid of any discussion and any exchange of views. In any scientifically-led discussion (and only such a discussion is proper), truth must be victorious. It is, however, necessary systematically to help our scientists, to arm them with arguments, creative ideas of scientific Socialism and political information. Only then will they be able to resist the attempts by foreign countries to influence them and, simultaneously, to convince the foreign scientists of the truth of Socialism. Such political and ideological work with scientists, to equip them for the ideological struggle, is an extremely important task for the Party organization and for responsible Communists at the institutions of higher learning. . . .

## *The Right Department*

A GROUP OF repatriates to Poland from the USSR are being processed at the border. At first they were rather shy of talking to the Polish officials, but finally one of them started a conversation. An official asked him, "Well, how were things in the Soviet Union?"

"Not too bad. I couldn't complain."

"How were wages there?"

"Well, we couldn't complain."

"But didn't you have to do forced labor for a while?"

"Yes, sort of, but I really couldn't complain."

"But I thought there wasn't much to eat, and when you got something it was pretty lousy?"

The repatriate shrugged. "I couldn't complain," he said.

"Then what the devil did you come back for?"

"What a question. Here at least I can complain."

*Excerpts from  
Controversial  
Czechoslovak  
Best-Seller:*

## *"The Cowards"*

A Novel

by *Josef Skvorecky*



Standard propaganda picture of a Czechoslovak partisan greeting a Soviet soldier in the 1945 "liberation." Photo from *Svet Sovetu* (Prague), May 7, 1958, Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship organ.

Skvorecky's *"The Cowards"* (Zbabelci) was published in Czechoslovakia in 1958; immediately it became a leading subject of controversy and attack. At the March 1959 national conference of the Writers' Union (see *Current Developments*), Ladislav Stoll, the Stalinist culture-boss, singled out the book as "cheap, slanderous and sensation-seeking." The head of the publishing house which put out the book was recently fired.

The book covers a period of eight days at the end of the war, during the "liberation," as various forces, Communist and non-Communist, jostle for control in a small Bohemian town. The protagonist and hero, Danny, who had fought the Germans in the non-Communist underground, looks with an equally cold eye on the politicians, orators and fake heroes, Communist and non-Communist alike. At no point does he assume the postures normal to a "Socialist hero." Indeed, his tone resembles nothing so much as that of the "beat generation."

Skvorecky is in his early thirties. He works as an associate editor of the Prague periodical *Svetova Literatura* (World Literature). This publication is modeled after a similar Soviet literary magazine dealing with foreign literature, including Western works. The Czech magazine is in great demand as indicated by frequent complaints from those unable to obtain it.

"WATCH IT," said Prema. "You hold the ammunition belt. I'll zero in."

I picked up the belt, Prema got in position behind the machine gun. A short series of deafening blasts that dulled my ears.

"Great," said Prema. I smelled the pungent odor of burned powder. Prema remained in position. I looked at the road. As the sun set, the road grew dark and twilight filled the slope on the right side. We sat over it and waited in silence. A distant roar of tanks resounded from the town. Something in me relaxed. Everything I had lived through flooded my mind, and suddenly I was terribly tired. And I began to be fed up with it. The thunder of tanks was coming nearer.

"They'll be here in no time," said Prema.

"Hmm," I said. I began to think of Irena, but she seemed terribly unimportant right now. After all this, it occurred to me, Irena won't be anything. I was an ass, but something more stupendous will come now. Unless we both croak here. My head was ghastly tired and fragmentary thoughts chased each other, none of them any good. The roar of tanks came quite close and suddenly, right below on the road, a black shadow appeared like a gigantic bug creeping quickly up the steep black and gray asphalt road.

"Watch it, now!" said Prema and bent over the gun handles. I pressed down to earth and lifted the ammunition belt. I felt the long cool shapes between my fingers. The sun had set completely and the country was veiled in shadows. Through them the tank crept quickly up, roaring. It was about half up the slope when another appeared behind it. Hell. It came to my mind that we were absolutely alone here. It could not be helped. Prema sat next to me like a statue and followed the oncoming tank with the machine gun. It was now very close and I saw it was wrapped around with SS men. All over the armor, the turret, in the front under the gun, they were everywhere as if pasted on, their submachine guns and grenades hanging down, and they moved through the dark landscape to the west. The tank's tracks rattled on the asphalt and the motor inside roared monotonously.

"Here we go!" said Prema. I felt him stretch his muscles and then the gun began to cough. From its barrel the flames lashed into the twilight and within a moment a pungent cloud of light smoke was around us. Ammunition pulled through my fingers. I stared at the road and saw bodies falling off the tank head down, and then the tank suddenly tilted. Figures jumped from it with arms spread. The tank bent a little more and turned over the edge of the road, over the edge and kept on turning down the slope into the valley. Its motors yelled in vain and then went silent. The dark giant shadow was vanishing in irregular jumps in the darkness of the gorge. Below us some figures crawled on the road. I turned toward the second tank. It had stopped and soldiers were jumping from both sides of it. It was in the middle of the hill and I could not see it well, just its black angular silhouette. Sparks flashed from its turret and bullets whizzed over our heads, splinter-

### "Wormy Fruit"

JOSEF RYBAK, former cultural editor of the Party organ *Rude Pravo*, recently appointed editor-in-chief of *Literarni Noviny*, reviewed "The Cowards" under the above title in *Rude Pravo*, January 14. After comparing the plot of the novel to an American Western, he concludes:

"So here you have the uncompromising, courageous presence . . . of a twenty-year old member of the golden youth who talks like a hard-boiled man, but at the same time knows that a well-behaved boy says a prayer to Our Lady before going to bed. . . . Skvorecky's book could mirror petty-bourgeois wretchedness if the author's view of life and reality were not determined by the book's hero, a cynical hooligan. But you notice that the author is delighted with his moral compost heap, that he even enjoys it and looks lovingly on the heroes, identifying himself with them. Through the eyes of these hooligans, even Soviet soldiers are seen as 'illiterate Russkies' well below Danny's intellectual level."

ing the trunks of trees behind us. We squeezed close to the earth. The tank fired for a while, then stopped.

"Let's go!" said Prema, got up and seized the machine gun handles. I got the belt. On the road the tank's motor was working in full gear again. Prema pressed the trigger and flames shot from the barrel. They blinded me and the tank disappeared for a moment. Instantly, a deafening explosion resounded and a bright light shone from the road. Heavy pieces of metal whizzed through the air. The tank burst open before our eyes and began to burn. Prema stopped shooting. In the silence from down below we heard the faint sound of a truck motor.

"What is it?" said Prema.

"I don't know," I said. We looked through the thickening darkness lashed by the flames of the burning tank. I recognized the black shadow of a truck which was quickly approaching. Some shots sounded and the truck came to a halt. Dark silhouettes of soldiers were pouring out.

"Hell!" said Prema. "They're — —"

"The Russkies," I said.

\* \* \*

"They knocked it out with an anti-tank gun," said Prema joyfully.

"Let's go see." We left the machine gun in the bushes and started running toward the burning tank. On the meadow we encountered the first Russians.

"Halt!" shouted a voice in German from the dark.

"We're partisans!" shouted Prema.

"Ah, partisans," said the Russian in a singing voice and in a moment we mingled with them. The Russkies with belted shirts and peculiar submachine guns with round ammunition drums and perforated barrel protectors, swinging in the flashing flame of the burning tank. They looked menacing. On the road, a bunch of Germans, jammed to-



gether with hands up. They looked around furiously as if seeking a way to escape. That was impossible. From the fields the Russkies were bringing more Germans, and their broad faces grinned and chuckled. Here and there isolated shots cracked through the air, but the soldiers by the tank ignored them. We stood there among the soldiers and looked at all this. Suddenly a civilian with a gun and a red arm band appeared in front of us. On his head he had a greasy cap.

"Are you from the brewery?" he asked us in a stern voice.\*

"Naw," said Prema. "We've got a machine gun on the hill up there."

"What?" said the guy in a threatening tone.

"A machine gun. We knocked out the first tank."

"What are you babbling, punk?"

"The one that went before this one," said Prema coolly, turning and pointing to a spot down the road where there was a black gap among regular white stone road-side markers. "There, it went over the slope."

"Damn," said the guy, and turned to a Russian with wide shoulder-boards full of stars and told him something in Russian.

\* \* \*

"Show us that machine gun, boys."

"C'mon," said Prema. We started across the meadow. The guy with the red ribbon and three Russkies went along. It was completely dark. We hit the woods and a Russian lit a flashlight. In its light the funnel-like barrel of our machine gun appeared.

"Oi," said the Russian and stepped down into the ditch behind the machine gun. The chum with the red ribbon stood still and said, "How the hell did you get it up here?"

"With a motorcycle. In a sidecar," said Prema.

"Where did you actually steal it from?"

"I had it since the mobilization. Since Thirty-eight."

The guy began talking with the Russki again and then turned to us. "What are your names?" he said.

I was just going to tell him, but it flashed through my mind why he asked. Maybe they want to decorate us. I saw a mental picture of it. The town square and the brass band and glory, Doctor Bohadlo, Bert with the Leica and the boys from our band in the rear with comments. No. Particularly no brass band. Suddenly I saw that this way it would be okay, the night and shooting and tanks and the Russkies, but later the glory speeches and articles in the local paper and Mr. Machacek and The History of Kostelec Uprising; no, none of it. I wished all this could be just mine. Just this here, so that I could tell Irena of that sense of personal adventure of mine. I blurted out: "Syrovatko."

"And you?" the chum asked Prema.

Prema threw a questioning look at me and said, "My name — is Svoboda."

"You're from Kostelec?"

"Yep."

The guy scribbled something in his notebook and then

patted our shoulders. "A nice show, boys. You stop by the National Committee tomorrow. And give me your addresses."

\* \* \*

"Buddy," said Prema, "why didn't you give him your name?"

"Huh," I said. "Buddy, I didn't want to. They might pull us through some pomp and circumstance."

"That's for sure," said Prema and we again stood still. From the west came only a slight murmur of departing tanks and nothing was heard from the town. Just that hum of the night again.

"Let's pack it up," said Prema's voice from the dark, tired and sad. Silently we stepped through the brush to the machine gun. Prema dismantled the ammunition belt and we pulled the gun to the meadow. Over our heads a brilliant, glorious spring sky was shining and suddenly I wanted to have some hope, something to live for, and from the night and stars, from somewhere this unknown girl emerged again, the one I was to meet, who was to be more sensash than all the Irenes and Veras and Lucias, who was to be good to me and sweet, and I tightened all my muscles and with Prema lifted that steel gun to the sidecar and all the springs squeaked. Then we went for the ammunition boxes and then we took our seats. Prema stepped on the gas. . . .

\* \* \*

I WAS THINKING and suddenly a funny noise came from somewhere. It sounded like a rattle of many wagon wheels and it was coming nearer. Then I heard a whip cracking and then in the opening of an anti-tank barrier two shabby little prairie horses appeared and behind them a cart with a Russki on the box seat. The Russki was cracking a whip over his head, the little horses galloped and cart wheels rattled on the paving. I watched the first Russki, then there appeared another cart and then they came one after another through the anti-tank barricade opening and streamed down the street toward the west. Everything was full of their rattle and cracking of long whips. They clattered one after another in a moving, stinking procession, in a wild gallop with redcheeked Russkies hanging in the air over the bruised backs of horses, singing Russian songs. People gazed at them from the pavements. The carts paced by madly and the tiny horses shook their heads. The line was endless. The air filled with their stink, the stink of some tundra or taiga, and I began to inhale it and stared at the windlashed faces and it seemed to me unbelievable that they really existed, these people who know nothing about jazz and girls, who just rolled forward with revolvers on greasy asses, unshaved, with vodka bottles in their pants, gay, drunk, victorious, ignorant of things I thought about, entirely different from me and strange, yet attractive. I admired them.

So this was the Red Army; they paced forward, stinking, barbaric, and I gazed at them and didn't know whether something wasn't really to start here, some revolution, and whether this had something to do with me and my world. But, no. Nothing was beginning here. Nothing for me — probably. They all paced by me and I was lost for this

\* Brewery: the headquarters of the non-Communist resistance organization.

cause. I knew that they would be welcomed and speeches would be made and that people would be enthusiastic about Communism and that I would be just loyal. I had nothing against Communism. I had nothing against anything as long as I could play saxophone in the jazz band and whistle at girls. I knew that these people, sitting on the carts, and those who would now found the Party and study Marx and Engels and Lenin and all that, were hungry people. They yearned for knowledge. I knew these people from the factory, from men's room discussions; they were thrilled by my prattle about the solar system and galaxies, Apollinaire and American history. They were hungry for things I was too full of. There was something different in me. The past and the forefathers and the matter-of-fact literacy for many generations, and some considerable comfort and luxury. It was quite interesting to read about these people. About the Negroes in America and the *muzhiks* in Russia, about shooting at workers and such things. About yearning for education and the fight for a better life. But on the whole it was just interesting and something strange. I had education and everyone here had it, and comfort and civilization. After all, education was only a basic, something naturally available like railroads or aspirin. Important were the girls and music. And thinking about them. And quite ultimately, after all, nothing was of importance. Everything was nothing and for nothing and no good. Just the animal fear of death — because nothing was known of that — kept man in the void. I was wondering if some day this fear in me would lose its importance. The carts rattled on and on, and suddenly I felt hard and sad. I turned and saw that from the church, against the stream of carts, there went Haryk with Lucia and Benno with Helen.

I waited for them and Benno said right away what I knew he would say: "If it ain't the patriotic warrior."

"Did you volunteer?" added Haryk.

"Shut up," I said. "And you better watch out Lucia doesn't pick up some liberator out of sheer enthusiasm."

"D'ya hear?" Haryk turned to Lucia, but she did not listen to him.

"Zdravstvuyte!"\*, she yelled like mad and Haryk left her, disgusted.

"The stupid broad's gone nuts," he said.

"Yeah. Don't forget," said Benno, "at two after lunch there's a rehearsal at Port. And tonight at six we play here on the square."

"Serious?" I said joyfully.

"Sure. They'll put on a show to celebrate peace."

"Dancing allowed?"

"Yah," said Benno.

The carts had passed by. Round the concrete square crowds thickened and Petrlik's brass band was forming up. The tower clock showed a quarter to ten. "Let's find a spot over there," said Haryk.

"Let's," said Benno.

"I've got to wait here," I said.

"Who for?" said Benno.

"Irena," I said coolly. Benno looked at me as if I were crazy and shook his head.

"You're an ass for sure, buddy," he said.

"For sure," I said.

"See ya," said Benno.

"See ya," said I. They took off. I was left alone on the corner. Under the stand in the square the local bigshots began to assemble. Former Mayor Prudivy who'd apparently taken over the office after Reichskommissar Kuehl, Mr. Kaldoun and Mr. Krocan and Mr. Machacek, they all were there, Director Otonius, Doctor Sabata, head physician Hubacek, they gathered under the stand and conferred. People were coming in and the police kept order. I saw the police commissioner Rimbalkin in a white jacket and corset, giving orders. I turned my face. Irena wasn't coming. I was not surprised, but as minutes passed I got fed up and mad at her. But whenever I got mad because she wasn't coming, I realized I loved her and began longing for her to come. I thought again of everything that had happened the night before and I drowned completely in the memories. When I came to, the square had been filled and the clock showed ten-thirty. I rose to my tiptoes and looked for Irena. She wasn't coming. I couldn't have seen her anyway since the pavements were full on both sides. So she walked out on me. That's what her promises were like. She walked out on me and God knows what she's been doing. Maybe Zdenek came back in the meantime. Maybe. I felt sad. I took off and pushed my way through to the stand. People gave me angry stares but I insisted I was on the welcoming committee. I was quite freshly fresh, but I could not care less. I pushed myself through to the front, where I had a clear view of the platform. Irena was a bitch. Under the stand was a little lift-up girl in folk costume with a bunch of flowers, trembling with fright. She was Manicka Kaldounovic. I knew her and felt sorry for her but not too much.

Gentlemen from the welcoming committee looked at their watches, nervously shuffling from foot to foot. The polished brass band with sousaphones round their necks was ready, waiting. People around me were swearing. It was a hot day and ten-thirty. Every now and then some murmur started in the street and people listened to it in silence, but nothing happened. I perspired terribly, and at last a distant shouting and applauding was heard and I knew that General Yablonkovski was entering the town. Everyone turned to the Savings Bank corner and looked. The applause grew and came nearer and then suddenly an open car turned the corner, then another, and went through the double lines of people toward the platform. The welcoming committee began to tremble and fell in line. Someone pushed the little lift-up girl out in front. The car door opened and a fatso in red riding pants with double braid rolled out, with a chest full of medals and a reddish face. The little girl began to squeak something and the General listened politely. Then he bent down, lifted her up and held her there for a while as the frightened photographers came to life. I caught a glimpse of the notorious Berta shooting the General from an impossibly low angle, and all of a sudden the brass band cut loose. The General quickly put the little girl down and saluted, gentlemen from the welcoming committee stood at attention and people

\* Greetings. Russian in the original.

### "Except Girls and Jazz"

HAVING FIRST printed a favorable review of "The Cowards," the Prague newspaper, *Vecerni Praha*, January 24, did an about-face with the following editorial statement:

"While Skvorecky's book pretends to ridicule some bourgeois strata, it is, in fact, an insulting disgrace. Rudely it insults the patriotic feelings of the broad masses of our nation who rose in arms against the occupation forces in the May days of 1945. . . . Skvorecky ignores the broad base of the national and democratic revolution which logically developed into a Socialist revolution. As a living conscience of May 1945 he presents the cynical hooligan Danny, to whom nothing, absolutely nothing, is sacred in this country—except girls and jazz. . . ."

"'The Cowards' is a deformed picture of the history of the revolution . . . a slanderous book, devoid of anything positive . . . [and] should not have made its appearance in our country, thirteen years after May 1945. It is unforgivable that [our reviewer] took a positive attitude towards this book."

began to take off their hats. They played the Russian anthem. I watched everyone standing stiff and among the welcoming gentlemen I saw the Deacon. He shrivelled in the background, with the purple opening under his white collar, and looked worried. The band had thundered through the Russian anthem and took up the Czech one. Then they thrummed the Slovak one and people were putting on their hats. Bandleader Petrlik was in full swing, however. Deep tones of bass-trombones flooded the square and I recognized "God Save the King." Round me people exchanged dubious looks and began to take off their hats again. Then the band started "The Star Spangled Banner" and finished the performance with the "Marseillaise." They did not play the Chinese one. Maybe they did not have the music. It took a quarter of an hour. General Yablonski's hand grew stiff and gentlemen in dark suits sweated. So did bandleader Petrlik. Finally he finished with a majestic gesture and looked victoriously at the General. The General dropped his hand from his cap and threw a crushing look at Doctor Sabata who was approaching him with some notes on paper. And Doctor Sabata put on his pince-nez and began to stutter something. The General stood again at polite attention, the sun shining into his red face and a big glossy drop trickled down his nose. Behind him, bored to tears, stood his bemuddled staff.

". . . and you're bringing us freedom on your gallant shoulders . . ." the breeze carried Sabata's voice to me. People got nothing of it. They wouldn't have gotten anything of it even if the Doc stuttered into a mike. I recalled that actually I should be thankful to him: a few

days ago he'd almost saved my life. But what the hell. Prema and his gang would have come anyway. Sabata whined through his speech and the polite General shifted from foot to foot. Then at last Sabata said a few words, without looking at the paper and stretched out his hand toward the General. The General took it enthusiastically and Sabata's knees sank a little. People began to clap their hands, then the gentlemen, doing some gymnastics, pushed the General to the platform. The clapping and shouting grew stronger. The General stepped heavily up to the platform and leaned his arms against the railing. He was a splendid figure. His uniform was a little dusty and the medals shone in the sun. . . .

"Tovarishchi!" and he began to speak. I didn't understand a word. After a while I got bored and gaped around at people. By their tense faces I guessed most of them did not understand him, either. And then I noticed that the welcoming committee crept slowly back to their place next to the platform. They looked timidly around, but as they saw that everything was over, they began applauding furiously. The General raised his voice all the way up and then the applause began.

"He's doing alright," I heard behind me. It was Haryk. "You said it," I said and kept on listening. About a quarter of an hour later the General finished. After the applause Mayor Prudivy got up on the platform, took out a piece of paper and began to say he was thanking General Jablonkovski for his speech.

"After six years of immense hardship," he said, "the Red Army brings us freedom at last. We can breathe freely again and our mothers no longer have to tremble with fear for their children. The hated German invader has been defeated by the heroic arms of our Slav brothers and other allies." His speech lasted for half an hour. Finally he put away the paper and called out: "Long live the free Czechoslovak Republic!"

Wild applause resounded. Prudivy waited and then shouted again: "Long live President Benes and Marshal Stalin!"

The applause lasted even longer. As it died down, Prudivy gave a roar in the loudest tone he could manage: "Long live our great Slavonic ally, the Youessessar!" "Screw that crap," said Haryk in a dampy voice behind me, "you potbelly potbellyovitch!" The square stormed with enthusiasm and Mr. Prudivy finished. The General moved and shook hands with everybody again. The brass band began a march. The ceremony was over. The gentlemen surrounded the General and dragged him to the Town Hall. I turned to Haryk.

"So at two o'clock at the bar," I said.

"Yup," said Haryk.

"Going home?" I said.

"Aha. Seeing Lucia home."

"See ya."

"See ya."



Delegates at the XXI Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, which ended February 5.

*Jovendonk (Budapest), February 8, 1959*

## Current Developments

### AREA

#### The German Problem

In similar notes to all the countries in the area the Soviet Union stated that the conclusion of a German peace treaty would also mean a settlement of the Berlin crisis. Moscow therefore declared that it had proposed the transformation of West Berlin into a demilitarized, free city "whose economic independence and . . . links to the West and East would be assured by international guarantees made safe by the participation of the big powers and the United Nations." At the same time the USSR suggested a summit conference as offering "the greatest chances for positive results." On the other hand, if the West did not wish such a conference, the Soviet Union would agree to a foreign ministers' conference, if it included Poland and Czechoslovakia. Naturally both Prague and Warsaw applauded this suggestion, reminding the world that they had been the countries "first attacked by Hitler's Germany." (Radio Prague, March 4.)

#### Reaction to Macmillan

While this exchange of notes went on, Prime Minister Macmillan of Great Britain arrived in Moscow, February 21, for a 10-day visit. At this time the East European press voiced hopes that his meeting with Khrushchev

would prove fruitful in the search for a relaxation of tension and a solution to the German problem, while continuing to point out the "hostility" of the other Western allies to Macmillan's visit. The Bulgarian Party organ, *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), February 28, for example, stated: "There are certain circles in the West which are irritated at any step toward securing peace in the world. Thus, the governing circles in Washington, Bonn and Paris continue to be nervous about Macmillan's visit to the Soviet Union."

The Polish Party newspaper, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), February 21, however, was particularly kind to the British Prime Minister, praising him as a representative of "the old and highly experienced British diplomacy [who] could very well start a round of fruitful international meetings. . . . If he were willing to assume the role of a mediator . . . he would then undoubtedly contribute to a lessening of tension in international relations."

Yugoslavia voiced a hope that the Macmillan trip might not only ease world tension, but even contribute to a more constructive attitude on the part of the USSR *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia. (Radio Belgrade, February 27.)

#### Senator Mansfield's Proposals

In the midst of the German crisis the Soviet bloc seized on Senator Mansfield's speech before the U. S. Senate, February 12, as an indication that the United States was ready to alter its policy toward Germany and treat the



Soviet proposals as a serious basis for negotiation. Among other things Senator Mansfield suggested that the Germans themselves "make the decisive decisions on unification," urged careful consideration of the Rapacki plan for military disengagement in Central Europe, and proposed a unified, neutral Berlin under U.N. protection. In Bulgaria, *Rabotnichesko Delo*, February 21, not only praised the Senator's speech but even claimed that "Mansfield's ideas on the German question are not only his own views. They reflect the opinion of the Democratic Party itself."

### Anti-Yugoslav Campaign Intensifies

At the 21st Soviet Party Congress Premier Khrushchev made it clear that the Soviet Union considered itself the sole oracle of Communism; it alone was entitled to lay down the principles under which the Communist camp would make the transition from "Socialism" to "pure Communism." The existence of so-called Yugoslav "revisionism" has therefore remained an increasingly sharp thorn in Khrushchev's side. (See *East Europe*, March, pp. 1, 2, 36-38.) While the Yugoslav Communists considered "the question of the withering away of the State as an immediate task," the Soviet leader saw such a process as a long-term development. Moreover, Yugoslavia's workers' councils and its agricultural de-collectivization were in

direct conflict with the Soviet thesis of the "managing role of the State." (*Izvestia* [Moscow], February 12.)

In this light, the anti-Yugoslav campaign was bound to continue and even increase in violence. Hungarian Party boss Kadar's attack on Yugoslavia (see below), was echoed by Czechoslovakia's Novotny before a large gathering of the Party faithful in Prague, February 12-13. The Bulgarian press followed suit, concentrating their offensive on the Yugoslav economy.

### Albania in Forefront

The most violent attacks, however, came from Albania. On February 20, *Zeri i Popullit* (Tirana), the Party organ, stated that Tito's tour through the Afro-Asian nations had been an attempt to convert these countries into "another base for imperialism." Similarly, Tito was accused by Radio Tirana, March 1, of wishing to revive the Balkan Pact, and in a speech by First Secretary Enver Hoxha, March 3, of plotting with King Paul of Greece to dismember Albania. *Zeri i Popullit*, March 6, editorialized as follows: "In his world campaign against Albania Marxist Tito cooperates with Greek King Paul, and together they try to put on paper their devilish dreams. . . . The King of Greece, the Titoite representative of reactionary Greek circles, once more . . . revived the discredited, shameful

## Lithuanian Literary Ferment

THROUGHOUT the Satellite bloc, in recent years, Writers' Congresses and the literary press have echoed to denunciations of writers for being influenced by "bourgeois tendencies," for disregard of the dogmas of "Socialist realism" and for inattention to the demands of "Socialist construction." Recently, at the January 21-23 Third Congress of the Lithuanian Writers' Union in Vilnius, the same sort of complaints were heard about writers who are, by the law's letter, citizens of the Soviet Union itself.

Following are excerpts from the Congress speech of one Kostas Korsakas, head of the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature at the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic who, obviously, is acting as the regime's voice:

"In addition to the rehabilitation of decadence in Lithuanian literature, uncritical views of bourgeois historiography are emerging. Some of our literary scholars and critics, as well as professors of literature and their students, recently started to use frequent quotations from periodicals of bourgeois days. Articles from *Zidynys*, *Naujoji Romuva*, *Atheneum* and similar bourgeois or clerical-minded magazines are being cited as reliable sources. Uncritical use of such sources often leads to the intrusion of bourgeois idealistic concepts in Soviet literary scholarship and the evaluation of literary works. . . .

"Our student youth has access to the publications of the days of the bourgeois regime, because of their significance

as sources of information. . . . However, certain facts indicate that youth is not being inculcated with critical views toward periodicals of bourgeois times, but rather to the contrary, use of those periodicals is part of an attempt to expose our literary inheritance in a wrong light, to revive unscientific bourgeois views. . . .

"Works of former authors are often republished without the necessary commentaries and introductory articles. They do not get extensive reviews in the press, in which the contents of those publications would be critically evaluated from the Marxist point of view. . . . Because of this, it is now believed more and more strongly that everything our Soviet publishing houses selected out of our literary inheritance and reprinted may be safely accepted as ideologically approved work, to be evaluated only positively and even to be glorified, while every criticism of such reprinted work is considered as almost a humiliation or even an insult to the writers of the past. . . .

"Here, at this Congress, the fact was exposed that some students, helping themselves with dictionaries, are reading works of representatives of Western estheticism (existentialists and such), that they are interested in the works of the Hungarian revisionist G. Lukacs—works which reached our Republic in German translations. In the meantime, we have not produced any works for our youth in their native language that reveal the real qualities of writings by these representatives of bourgeois estheticism. There has been only one article reprinted here in translation, intended to unmask the positions of the revisionist Lukacs." (*Literatura ir Menas* [Vilnius], February 7, 1959.)

and absurd pretensions of the Greek chauvinist elements in Southern Albania."

Another anti-Tito move was Albania's accusation that Yugoslavia was persecuting the ethnic Albanians living in the Kossovo region of Yugoslavia. According to Radio Tirana, February 28, "the Kossovars have been forced to abandon their houses, their villages and their towns and look for jobs in the interior of Yugoslavia. The causes are political oppression, measures of terror and extermination, and mass unemployment, for economic development in Kossovo has been left at the point where it was in the past period [between the two World Wars] . . . The dissolution of collectives in 1949, lack of tractors, concentration of the means of work in the hands of the kulaks . . . made it impossible for the peasants of the very fertile land of Kossovo to earn their bread, and compelled them to emigrate."

"Violations" of Albania's territorial waters by Yugoslav ships added more fuel to the fire. According to Radio Tirana, February 14, "on several occasions" Yugoslav ships entered the coastal waters of Albania "in flagrant violation of international procedure and practice." These "provocations" allegedly occurred because Yugoslavia wished "to divert the attention of Yugoslav public opinion from the internal economic and political situation caused by the criminal and anti-social policy of the Belgrade revisionists." (*Zeri i Popullit*, February 15.)

Belgrade told a different story. In their version of the incidents, contained in an official note handed to the Chargé d'Affaires of the Albanian legation in Belgrade, Yugoslav ships "were compelled by *force majeure* to seek shelter in the Albanian ports." Furthermore, according to Radio Belgrade, February 26, the Albanian legation refused to accept the diplomatic note.

#### Tito Replies

It was not until Marshall Tito returned from his tour that he replied to the charges made by the Soviet bloc against his country. Speaking before a crowd estimated at 200,000, in Skoplje, Macedonia, Tito accused Albanian leader Hoxha of "making warmongering, slandering speeches against our peaceful country," likening him to Goebbels, Nazi propaganda minister. (Radio Belgrade, March 6.) More detailed replies to Albania were made in Tito's speech celebrating his return to the capital. Regarding his Afro-Asian tour, he stated that he had not made his trip in order to undermine anyone's authority. He was, however, "extraordinarily surprised, even astounded, to note that during our visit to Indonesia, Chou En-lai, a well-known Chinese statesman, appealed to the Indonesian people not to believe us and not to welcome us as warmly as they did, because we worked for the interests of imperialism." The Yugoslav President then went on to answer various Albanian "slanders:"

"As for the Balkan pact, the assertion that we are members of the Atlantic pact through the Balkan pact is a fabrication. You know what the status of the Balkan pact has been for many years now. It has, so to say, fallen asleep. Nor do we plan to revive it. . . . Another thing I

should like to mention . . . is the question of the Kossovo minorities [which] the Albanian Parliament . . . has said would be taken to the United Nations. If anyone takes anything there, then it is we, the Yugoslavs, who should raise the question of the hostile, warmongering campaign organized by some Albanian leaders."

Tito also revealed Khrushchev's original and hitherto "neglected" sentiments toward Yugoslavia's acceptance of American aid: "Comrade Khrushchev accused us of receiving American aid. He knows very well that we have been receiving it . . . and when I first told him about it, he said: 'It is good that you are getting it. If they are offering it, accept it.' And now, at the [21st Party] Congress, all of a sudden it became convenient to emphasize that since we are accepting American aid, there must be something behind it. There is nothing behind it." (Radio Belgrade, March 7.)

#### Kadar Answered

Yugoslavia also took time out to reply to Kadar's speech in Prague, when he linked "Yugoslav revisionism" with the 1956 Hungarian revolt. According to Radio Zagreb, February 24, Kadar claimed that "Hungary was a victim [in 1956] of Yugoslav revisionism and not of the dogmatism and Stalinism of Rakosi, Gero, Hegedus and others. It is interesting . . . that Janos Kadar broaches a subject which the 21st Congress did not mention at all, obviously because they thought it inconvenient to mention it at a time when the same policy, the same concepts, the same practices which brought Hungary to the brink of catastrophe are again coming to the fore . . . within the camp itself."

#### More Albanian "Spies" Arrested

Less than a month after the conclusion of the trial of an alleged Albanian spy in Prizren (see *East Europe*, March, p. 38), five more spies were tried and sentenced

#### Why Catch Up?

THE APOLOGISTS of capitalism unflinchingly repeat that there is an abundance of consumer goods in the capitalist countries and that it is possible there to buy whatever you wish, whereas in the Soviet Union many goods are often in short supply. This is true. But the argument does not favor capitalism. Why is almost every type of consumer goods available under capitalism? Because the income of the broad masses of the working people in the capitalist countries is insufficient to purchase the mass of goods which capitalists are constantly throwing on the market in the pursuit of profit. Or, to put it more simply, the abundance of goods in the capitalist countries is a consequence of the fact that the workers do not have enough money to buy these goods. . . . The shortage of goods in the Soviet Union is a transitional phenomenon."

E. Varga in *Kommunist* (Moscow), December 1958.

## POLAND



Front page of the Polish weekly *Siat i Polska*, which Western sources have reported is to be suppressed because the Party considers it "Western-minded, exhibiting revisionist tendencies and of negative propaganda value." This issue of the Warsaw paper, February 8, 1959, features a cover-picture of Marie-Thérèse Goyenetch, a young Frenchwoman involved in the current Lacaze scandal in France; two further pages of text and pictures are devoted to the Lacaze affair, in a tone of straightforward sensationalism rather than a propaganda sermon on Western decadence and corruption.

in the district court at Pec, receiving from three to five-and-a-half years at hard labor. They were found guilty of collecting military and economic data for the Albanian intelligence service. (Radio Belgrade, March 5, 7.)

#### Tito Recalls Envoy

An indication of just how far Yugoslav-Albanian relations have recently deteriorated was the announcement, March 14, that Tito had recalled his Ambassador to Tirana for re-assignment in the Foreign Ministry. No successor, however, was named. (*New York Times*, March 15.)

Yet in spite of the Yugoslav-Albanian "cold war," it is interesting to note that a protocol on commercial exchanges between the two countries during 1959 was signed in Belgrade, February 20. (Radio Belgrade, February 20.) The dispute therefore, though fierce, is still quite different from the previous struggle between Belgrade and the Cominform, when all relations—State as well as Party—were cut.

### Third Party Congress

In the midst of pre-Congress "politicking" came the announcement of Party boss Gomulka's illness in Moscow, where he was attending the 21st Soviet Party Congress; he remained in the USSR a week longer than the other delegates, recovering from an "attack of influenza" and discussing "questions of mutual interest" with Soviet leaders. (Tass, February 15.) On his return he apparently made no appearance on the political scene until the opening of the Polish Congress on March 10.

#### Pre-Congress Activity

During this pre-Congress period, almost all the members of the old Central Committee were re-elected delegates to the Congress. This meant that the composition of the Central Committee would probably not change radically from the membership elected at the last Congress in 1954, before Gomulka gained power. Such well-known members of the dogmatist, anti-Gomulka "Natolin" group as Franciszek Mazur and General Witaszewski were elected delegates; on the other hand, three prominent Stalinists, Franciszek Jozwiak, Wiktor Klosiewicz and former "dictator of the economy" Hilary Minc, were absent from the list of delegates.

Talk about "revisionism" and "dogmatism" characterized the pre-Congress provincial conferences. The most noteworthy speeches were made by Premier Josef Cyrankiewicz and Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki, who defended the so-called "middle way" of the Gomulka government. In a Party meeting in Koszalin, February 16, Cyrankiewicz appealed for "a growing confidence in the stable political line which the government began in 1956." (*Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw], February 17.) On February 14, at a similar gathering of Party members in Zielona Gora, Adam Rapacki lectured on the regime's agricultural policy, declaring, "We shall never again return to administrative or economic pressures regarding the collectivization of agriculture." (*Trybuna Ludu*, February 15.)

#### Low Level "Socialist" Representation

Some 1,431 fully accredited delegates attended the Congress; however, in the list of foreign guests representing other Communist countries, no First Secretaries or Premiers were present. The Soviet delegation was headed by Nikolai Ignatov, a member of the Presidium and Secretary of the Central Committee considered close to Khrushchev and now concerned with agricultural affairs. Communist China sent the most important Communist observer and the only one with an international reputation, Marshal Chu Teh, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. While according to past practice top-ranking representation from "Socialist" countries is not mandatory, it is noteworthy that Khrushchev himself saw fit to attend last year's Congresses in Bulgaria and East Germany—though not the Czechoslovak one. The lack of

Communist luminaries in the Polish case—the most populous country in the area and the most troubled ideologically—was made all the more striking by the presence of such second-stringers as Marosan from Hungary, Borila from Romania, Barak from Czechoslovakia and Staykov from Bulgaria.

Yugoslavia was the only Communist country not represented at the Congress, and apparently even the Yugoslav ambassador was not invited.

### Latest Reports

At this writing the keynote speech of Party leader Gomulka appears to have set the tone of the Congress. In his general approach he implied that Poland would not return to the pre-1956 days of Stalinism; nevertheless the Party would brook no interference from "revisionists" or

any other factions in disagreement with Gomulka's blueprint.

Specifically, Gomulka stated that Poland would continue to form a solid front with the Soviet Union in matters of foreign policy; he supported the USSR's proposals for a separate peace treaty with the East German government if Bonn refused to sign, while evoking the spectre of "West German militarism" and the desire of Poland to receive full guarantees that the Oder-Neisse frontier be perpetuated. He stated that the security of the Polish frontiers was based on an "unbreakable alliance with the USSR [and] the unshakable unity of the Socialist camp."

In stressing the economic advances of the Communist nations, Gomulka hailed the prominence of the Soviet Union and at the same time claimed that "there are no superior or subordinate parties. All are equal and independent." He also attacked the Yugoslav "revisionists" which he declared had placed themselves outside the "international Communist movement," and had attempted to split the "unity of the Socialist camp." Nevertheless, Gomulka was relatively mild in his criticism of Yugoslavia and even held out hope for the return of the Yugoslav Communists to "the Communist movement." Somewhat defensively, considering the similarity in some internal policies, he stated that the Polish Party was not linked by any ideological bonds with the Yugoslav Communists.

In his statements regarding the future of the Catholic Church in Poland, Gomulka pledged continued "religious freedom," but warned the church "to limit itself to matters of faith" and to "stop provoking the people's authority." He also warned writers to produce literature which was "realistic in form and Socialist in ideological content," and explained that one of the chief tasks of the Party would be to eliminate "anti-Socialist influences" and "revisionist tendencies" in cultural circles. In his conclusion Gomulka praised Nikita Khrushchev for his fight against the "anti-Party group" and stated that the Polish Communist Party was already united in its fight against both "revisionism" and a return to "dogmatism." (Radio Warsaw, March 10.)

### No Return to Forced Collectivization?

Another important speech before the Third Party Congress contained the promise not to use force in attempting to reach the accepted theoretical goal of agricultural collectivization. Edward Ochab, Minister of Agriculture, stated that although the development of collective farms was essential in the construction of a "Socialist" State, "it must take place in accordance with the will of the peasants, and any violation of this principle of free-will results in great economic harm to collectives as well as to the State." Therefore, while paying lip-service to the principle of collectivization laid down at the Soviet 21st Party Congress, the Polish Communists apparently do not intend at present to reverse the previous policy of the Gomulka regime. Ochab warned the Stalinist elements within Poland that the "Party and government will not act on the advice of those dogmatists who would like to speed up development [of collectives] with the help of administra-

### Buy Now, Flee Immediately

ACCORDING TO A recent report on Radio Warsaw, February 2, the installment-buying system in Poland has until recently been a gold-mine for the larcenous; it was, it seems, another method by which Poles institutionalized theft in a society that would not permit them to survive decently without it. The broadcast said that in 1955 the Warsaw municipal clothing installment buying trade had over 25,000 customers who refused to pay their installments. In 1956 the number rose to nearly 27,000. In the first half of 1958, 38,000 customers were wearing clothes, payment on which was already the subject of court action. In the furniture trade over 14,000 customers were on the blacklist.

"It was discovered," the broadcast said, "that there were whole gangs of customers who endorsed one another's promissory notes, who bought everything on the installment plan, from clothing to accordions. All these goods were sold for cash the next day, and nobody worried about the promissory notes. It was enough to change one's job, to leave for the provinces, and that was the end of it." The whole process was made easier, it appears, by functionaries who provided, presumably for a fee, official certificates of employment and salary-earning.

All this is now changed, the broadcast said, but only in Warsaw. In the capital a new system has been introduced by which the hopeful installment-buyer must present the proper credentials indicating he is permanently employed at a certain salary; these credentials are checked in a couple of days, and if valid he is permitted a charge account. The new system has reduced losses in Warsaw to about 1.5 percent of the installment buying turnover. Outside Warsaw, however, "there is such a plan, but it is intended for the fairly distant future. In this case haste seems advisable."



## Current Developments—Poland



### Congress Stamps



Three new Polish postage stamps, issued to commemorate the Third Congress of the Polish Party, which opened March 10.

*Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), March 1, 1959

tive [that is, forceful] measures.”

Nevertheless, the anti-Gomulka group was not completely silenced. Wladyslaw Kruczek, long identified with the Stalinists, stated at the Congress, presumably in reference to Ochab's program, that the Party was forgetting that this “voluntary business did not exclude Communists from trying hard to put across collectivization.” (*New York Times*, March 15.) [The Congress will be covered thoroughly next month upon receipt of the entire record of the proceedings.]

### Ferment Among Writers

In the weeks preceding the Third Congress, further attacks on writers appeared. Those most sharply criticized belong to the so-called “*Europa* group,”\* many of whom were purged early in February from the editorial staff of the Warsaw cultural weekly, *Przegląd Kulturalny*, including critic Jan Kott, and poets Pawel Hertz and Mieczyslaw Jastrun. (See *East Europe*, March, p. 40.) Nevertheless, individual members of the group still appear to be holding their own against Party pressures. According to Western correspondents, Jerzy Andrzejewski, associated with the *Europa* project, was recently re-elected Chairman of the Warsaw branch of the Writers' Union.

From Vienna came a report that the well-known writer, Jan Wyka, had been dismissed from the Party, apparently as a result of a lecture he had delivered on the history of the Communist Party at the anti-Stalinist literary club, *Krzywe Koło*, in Warsaw. (*Die Presse*, January 4.)

Non-conformist writers came under fire from the regime's cultural spokesman, Leon Kruczkowski, head of the Central Committee's department of culture and art, who accused them in a speech before the Parliament [Sejm] of spreading “anti-Socialist and reactionary ideologies and views.” (Radio Warsaw, February 12.) In reply, a writer and Catholic deputy to the Sejm, Stefan Kisielewski, while admitting that some form of political censorship was necessary at this time, declared that censors should be intelligent and well-qualified for their jobs, which was not always the case. Socialist realism, Kisielewski pointed out, was now outdated, and by cutting out writers' pessimistic passages, the censors were returning to practices associated with the Stalinist period. A literature of false op-

timism, he concluded, was equally detrimental and discouraging to the people. (*Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw], February 13.)

### Khrushchev To Visit Poland

In honor of the fifteenth anniversary of the formation of the postwar Communist-dominated regime in Lublin Soviet Premier Khrushchev will head a delegation from the USSR on an official visit to Poland this July, Radio Warsaw announced, March 4.

### Koch Sentenced

On March 9, Erich Koch, former Nazi Gauleiter for East Prussia and Northeast Poland, was sentenced to death by a Polish court in Warsaw. He was found guilty of having been responsible for the deaths of more than 400,000 Poles and Polish Jews. Although Koch escaped from Poland after the war, he was arrested in 1949 by the British in their zone of Germany; in 1950 he was turned over to Polish authorities, but a prolonged illness was said to have delayed his trial. (Radio Warsaw, March 9.)

### American “Spies” Caught

The arrest of “a number of agents of the American Intelligence Service” by a member of the Katowice (Silesia) security police was announced by *Trybuna Ludu*, February 18. Other “American spies” were apprehended in Czechoslovakia. (See below.)

### University Student Exchange with USA

An exchange of university students between Poland and the United States will begin this year, Radio Warsaw

### Polish Youth Organization

**L**ATEST FIGURES on the size and composition of the ZMS, the Polish Union of Socialist Youth, successor to the detested Stalinist youth organization ZMP which collapsed after the October 1956 upheaval, indicate that the new organization has not, after two years, had much success. The official press agency stated on February 7 that there were 223,700 members in the organization, far smaller than the ZMP which numbered well over a million in its heyday (the coercive pressures to join the old organization were of course far greater than at present). Of this membership, the agency said, 126,700 are workers, 43,200 are white-collar workers, 5,500 agricultural workers and 44,200 secondary school pupils. Of university students, whom one would expect to be the most politically aware and concerned, there are only 3,200 members.

On January 29, the press agency stated that the other Polish youth organization, the Rural Youth Union, which is connected with the Peasant Party, has 200,000 members.

\* *Europa*, a projected review dealing with Western literature, was planned in 1957 but banned by the regime; several writers associated with it then left the Party in protest.



Some of the first pictures to appear in Poland of the recent Moscow exhibit of contemporary art from the "Socialist camp." The Poles have been somewhat shy about commenting on the exhibit; Polish entries were severely criticized by the Soviets for showing the influence of Western abstractionism, as opposed to the paintings from the rest of the area. The caption states that the young man below is saying: "Abstract art is not for me."

Photos from *Sztandar Młodych* (Warsaw), February 14-15, 1959



announced on February 10. This is the first such exchange between the US and Communist Poland, although some Polish students have come here on grants from private foundations.

## 1958 Plan Fulfillment

Poland's economy performed better than planned during 1958, according to the Central Statistical Office. (*Trybuna Ludu* [Warsaw], February 10.) Industrial production rose by 9.5 percent, as against 6.1 percent planned, and national income went up by 5.6 percent. One of the major "tasks" of 1958, the stemming of inflationary pressures, was not entirely achieved: the average money wage in industry rose 6 percent, but a rise in living costs cut the increase in real terms to 3.5 percent. On the other hand, the regime was more successful with its other major economic problem, the foreign trade balance. Exports rose by 8.5 percent (in unadjusted prices) and imports declined by 4.1 percent; exports of machinery and other industrial equipment rose by 10.5 percent, and those of farm produce and food by 13.9 percent. The effort to improve living standards had the unusual result, for a Communist country, that the production of consumer goods rose 10.2 percent and the production of capital goods rose only 8.8 percent. Retail sales rose about 6 percent after allowing for price increases. Meat supplies were 20 percent above the previous year. Agriculture had another good year, with crops of grain about 10 percent higher than the average for 1954-1957, and of sugar beet 19 percent higher.

The report gave the following production figures (percentage increases over 1957 in parentheses): electric power, 23.9 billion kwh (13); bituminous coal, 94,981,000 tons (0.9); brown coal, 7,541,000 tons (27); petroleum, 175,-

000 tons (minus 3); coke, 11.1 million tons (2); crude steel, 5.6 million tons (6); rolled steel, 3.7 million tons (3); zinc, 163,000 tons (2); aluminum, 22,000 tons (10); electrical machines, rotating, 587,000 (43); metal machine tools, 21,016 (6); tractors, 4,430 (minus 35); steam locomotives, 68 (minus 69); railway coaches, 597 (4); freight cars, 9,776 (minus 18); motor cars, 11,507 (45); motor trucks, 10,233 (1); ocean vessels over 100 DWT, 175,000 tons (19); motorcycles and motorbikes, 88,000 (41); bicycles, 310,000 (36); radios, 790,000 (22); television sets, 57,000 (257); sewing machines, home, 163,000 (4); washing machines, home, 222,000 (53); refrigerators, 23,000 (154); sulfuric acid, concentrated, 573,000 tons (15); calcined soda, 98 percent pure, 379,000 tons (59); caustic soda, 96 percent pure, 151,000 tons (11); fertilizers, 100 percent pure, 381,000 tons (12); artificial silk yarn, 18,000 tons (8); artificial fiber, 42,000 tons (2); the synthetic fiber steelon, 2,274 tons (67); polyvinylchloride, 4,207 tons (2,434); automobile tires, 1.2 million (36); cement, 5.0 million tons (12); slaked lime, 1.7 million tons (1); bricks, 2.9 million (minus 0.5); cellulose, 236,000 tons (5); paper, 432,000 tons (7); cotton fabrics, 598 million meters (5); woolen fabrics 78 million meters (2); silk fabrics, 95 million meters (7); linen fabrics, 74 million meters (7); knitwear, 13,723 tons (8); hosiery, 103 million pairs (minus 3); leather footwear, 35 million pairs (15); rubber footwear, 23 million pairs (3); meat from compulsory slaughter, 1 million tons (18); canned meat, 38,000 tons (14); fish, 111,209 tons (2); butter, 87,951 tons (12); vegetable fats, 64,000 tons (29); margarine, 40,000 tons (76); chocolate products, 16,926 tons (14); beer, 6 million hectoliters (7); vodka and spirits, 100 percent pure, 734,000 hectoliters (minus 9); wine and honey, 1.2 million hectoliters (19), cigarettes, 45.4 billion (6).

## HUNGARY

### Kadar in Prague

As the Kadar regime has continued to revoke the gains registered in the 1956 Revolt, the most recent step in this direction being their campaign to increase collectivization (see below), they have drawn even closer to the more orthodox regimes of East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Latest indication of this cordiality was Party leader Kadar's visit to Czechoslovakia (Feb. 18-21), during which he praised collectivization and sharply attacked Yugoslav "revisionism," linking Yugoslavia with "West German militarism." He stated:

"We cannot tell the Yugoslav revisionists what they should do, but we can tell them to keep their ideologies . . . to themselves. We do not need them. We know what revisionism is and what Marxism-Leninism is. The Hungarian People's Republic, for instance almost perished from revisionism, and Marxism-Leninism brought it back to life, and we thank Marxism-Leninism that it is alive now. (*Nepszabadsag* [Budapest], February 20.) (For Yugoslav reply, see Area.)

At the end of the visit a joint communique was issued, which praised the 21st Soviet Party Congress for pointing out the correct road for the two nations to follow in their respective efforts to achieve the goal of "pure Communism."

### Collectivization Surges Ahead

The new drive to collectivize Hungarian agriculture, signalled at a Party Central Committee meeting in December, is said to have advanced with a rapidity unprecedented in Hungary. Early in March the regime claimed that the area of land in collective farms had grown by two-thirds during January and February. (*Nepszabadsag* [Budapest], March 8.) To the 848,000 hectares and 144,000 members in collectives at the end of 1958, the drive had added 575,000 hectares and "almost 200,000" new members, bringing the total collectivized area to over 28 percent of Hungary's arable land. The paper said:

"Some 40 percent of the country's arable land now belongs to the Socialist sector [including collective farms, State farms, cooperative groups and cooperative associations—Ed.], which is more than double the largest figure before the 1956 counterrevolution. In Gyor and Szolnok Counties the Socialization of agriculture has been almost completed, and in Veszprem, Fejer and Komaron Counties one-half of the arable area belongs to the Socialist sector."

At its highest point, in June 1953, Hungary's collectivized area embraced about 27.9 percent of the arable land. It fell to 20 percent in December 1953, during the first premiership of Imre Nagy, was about 16 percent at the end of 1955, and fell again during and after the Revolt in October 1956.\*

\* Number of members fell from 446,900 in Dec. 1952 to 229,950 in Dec. 1954; after the Revolt it fell to 158,470 in March 1957. Total membership is still below that of 1953.

The drive is being pushed with a battery of social and economic pressures, some of which were spelled out in the Central Committee's resolution in December (see *East Europe*, March, p. 46). Kadar has also revived the old Stalinist dogma of increasing class struggle as a justification for the potential use of more forceful measures. His spokesman, Lajos Feher, stated in an article in the February 8 issue of *Nepszabadsag*:

"The expansion of Socialism naturally does not please reactionary elements either inside or outside the country. Therefore, parallel with the expected expansion of the collective farm movement, it is natural to anticipate an increase in the anti-collective, subversive activity of hostile elements, kulaks and others. There are already indications of this tendency. Both Communists and non-Communists must be prepared to meet this challenge and a campaign must be launched to expose and isolate them."

A new and very effective device has been the introduction of "cooperative villages and towns." A locality may be designated "cooperative" even if only a minority of the farmers in it have joined a collective farm. The town or village government is then handed over to the collective farm and the independent peasants are forced to depend upon the collective authorities for the ordinary functions of civil administration. The device has been extended to higher administrative levels; on February 14 *Nepszabadsag* reported that the district of Sopron, in northwest Hungary on the Austrian border, had been made a "cooperative district." The newspaper reported on March 2 that 524 "cooperative villages" had been formed, 172 of them in Gyor-Sopron County and 157 in the county of Veszprem.

### Bela Kovacs Enlisted

One of the most surprising developments in the collectivization campaign was the appearance of an article in *Magyar Nemzet* (Budapest) on February 20 signed by Bela Kovacs, a former leader of the outlawed Smallholders' Party, endorsing collective farming. Kovacs had been Minister of Agriculture immediately after the war, before the Communists seized power, and again during the October Revolt. In the interim period he had been deported to the Soviet Union. In his article, Kovacs wrote that he agreed with the "guiding principles and substantial statements" of the Central Committee's resolution on collectivization, and that he was "glad to hear the news that, following the Party resolution, masses of peasants have set out on the cooperative path." He explained his change of attitude by saying that in the spring of 1956, after his return from the Soviet Union, he "had become a Socialist man":

"I had made a careful study of the opposing systems of Socialism and capitalism . . . and three years ago I recommended Socialist cooperative husbandry to the peasants of the Baranya County, without especially great success. I am glad that the Party has succeeded in defeating the stiff opposition of the landowning peasantry to the idea of co-operation, which I met often in 1956, with a feeling of bitterness. . . ."

## Current Developments—Hungary

"The Socialist conviction that had taken shape and crystallized in me was expressed by me without ambiguity in October 1956 in Pecs and in the parliament building in Budapest when I was invited to become a minister. . . . I disapproved of a return to the multi-party system. I said so at the time in Semmelweis Street, where I found a mixed gathering vying among themselves for white collar jobs and power and, on the whole, longing for the old world hated by me. These people said that they were reorganizing the Smallholders' Party. I told this to my friends and the ministers in the parliament building; I talked about my anxieties, and the next hours and days bore out my misgivings. Concerning the efforts made by Janos Kadar and his friends after November 4 [1956] . . . even if I disagreed with certain details of the steps taken by them, I could and can speak only with appreciation. It was only my illness that prevented me from joining them and taking part in their work."

On February 26, Radio Budapest, in one of its foreign broadcasts, dealt with the international reaction to Kovacs' article, and especially with the obvious charge that the statement had been made under duress:

"The enemies of our country and of our people are infinitely indignant over the fact that thousands and thousands of peasant families—after many years of brooding—are now choosing, voluntarily and in good faith, the Socialist form of agriculture. This wonderful upsurge of peasant enthusiasm inspired Bela Kovacs to write, and any enlightened peasant would have written the same, although perhaps in a less polished manner."

This development confirmed previous reports that Kovacs became a member of parliament in the last "election."

### 1959 Budget

The speech of Finance Minister Istvan Antos to the National Assembly on the 1959 budget (*Nepszabadsag*, February 20) was notable for its lack of detail and for its variance with earlier published reports. He estimated total revenue for the year at 52,896 million *forint*, or 11.9 percent higher than "that of last year," and total expenditure at 52,059 million *forint*, or 11.8 percent higher. He gave the breakdown of the budget as follows, in comparison with last year's planned budget (in billions of *forint*):

	1959	1958
<b>Receipts</b> .....	52.9	49.8
<b>Expenditure</b> .....	52.1	48.7
National economy .....	28.9	25.2
Social and cultural .....	16.3	14.2
Defense .....	4.9	6.2
Administration .....	2.0	
Other .....	—	3.1
<b>Surplus</b> .....	0.8	1.1

Taxes will be raised for the top stratum of independent peasants by 12 to 18 percent. Antos said that the increases will apply to farms of over 8 holds (about 4.5 hectares) and will affect about 15 percent of the farms. Taxes will also be raised for private artisans, although he did not specify to what extent. The higher expenditures in the "social and cultural" category are accounted for by the increases in pensions that took place on January 1 (see *East Europe*, February, 1959, p. 51) and by a proposed



The Hungarian regime is claiming great success for its recent stepped-up drive to collectivize agriculture. These pictures show the farmers in two villages discussing their future after having decided, the caption says, to become "cooperative villages," i.e., to collectivize. The success of the campaign is apparently largely attributable to a recent innovation by which a collective farm takes over all village administrative functions, thus exerting pressure on the independent farmers to join the kolkhoz.

Photos from *Jovendonk* (Budapest), February 15, 1959

increase in family allowances which is expected to cost the State 500 million *forint*.

### Economic Speed-Up Planned

The note of improvisation in this budget apparently reflected a sudden switch in plans after the return of Hungary's delegation to the recent Twenty-First Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. Antos said that the Hungarian workers had been inspired by the Congress to think of speeding up Hungary's economic development: "With that end in view we should support and encourage all efforts for overfulfillment of the Three Year Plan [1958-60] directed toward the stepping up of production for export, a reduction in the number of articles in short supply on the home market and the more rapid completion of investment projects."

On March 8 *Nepszabadsag* carried the text of a resolution adopted by the Party Central Committee on March 6, calling upon the country to "achieve by the end of 1959 a few of the most important targets of our people's economy planned for 1960 under our Three Year Plan. . . . Let us achieve, through a consistent enforcement of economy and improvement of our work, a rise of 8.3 percent this year in the national income of all branches of the people's economy, thus achieving this year the standard we set for 1960."

### Writers' Union To Be Revived

The Writers' Union, abolished by the Kadar regime due to its activities before and during the 1956 revolt, may be re-established, according to the February issue of *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest). An article entitled "Hungarian Literature since the Liberation," prepared by the cultural section of the Party's Central Committee, stated that the reorganization of the Writers' Union would apparently occur in



the near future, and would be "in the hands of the Literary Council [founded in 1957] and those Communist and independent writers who are faithful to Socialism and the people's power." No reference was made to many former writers of the Union who have kept silent since the crushing of the Revolt, generally limiting their activities to translating, editing or arranging their earlier books for republication, nor, of course, was there mention of the leading writers, such as Tibor Dery, who are still in prison.

### Seminary Closed

The Vatican's daily newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, reported on March 3 that the Theological Academy of Budapest had been closed by the government. The immediate result of this action will be to halt the education of a new generation of priests for the most important and largest diocese of the country, the Archdiocese of Esztergom. The Church is further hampered in the education of the clergy by the fact that the government does not permit theological students to study in Catholic universities outside the country.

### Sports Council Ousts "Counterrevolutionists"

On February 16 the National Council of Physical Training and Sports held a meeting of its general assembly in the capital, according to Radio Budapest the same day. Gyula Hegyi, Chairman of the Council, addressed the meeting and stated that "the ideological consequences of the counterrevolution [i.e., the 1956 Revolt] had been eliminated from Hungarian sports." He also reported that a total of 96 persons "who have taken part in various counterrevolutionary activities have been removed from the leading sports organizations and replaced by more honorable athletes."



## CZECHOSLOVAKIA

### Czechoslovak Cabinet Re-shuffled

The Party's Central Committee, meeting March 4-5, "recommended" the following cabinet changes in the government:

The appointment of Otakar Simunek as Deputy Premier and Chairman of a State Planning Commission. (This new Commission will probably replace the State Planning Office which Simunek has headed for several years.) The appointment of Rudolf Barak as Deputy Premier. (Barak has been Minister of the Interior since 1953, and he may also continue in this capacity.) Lubomir Strougal as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, replacing Michal Bakula. (No reason was given for this change.) Minister-without-portfolio Josef Tesla to be removed from his post "for reasons of health."

These changes were confirmed on March 7 by President Antonin Novotny. (Radio Prague, March 7.)

### Re-Stalinization of Cultural Life

Recent months have seen the campaign to force artists to follow the Party line gain in intensity. At a national conference of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, held in Prague, March 1 and 2, a number of the Union's Central Committee members were purged. This was the final reaction to the famous Writers' Congress of April 1956 (held two months after the 20th Soviet Party Congress), which had resulted in an open revolt against the Party hacks and had introduced a liberalizing trend in literature and art. Now, however, six writers were dropped from the Central Committee, among them the 1956 rebel poet, Jaroslav Seifert; eight new members, all apparently orthodox Stalinists, were elected to the CC, including Jiri Taufer, former Deputy Minister of Culture, and Ladislav Stoll, President of the Institute of Social Sciences. Stoll, who had been one of the prime targets for attack at the 1956 Congress, also delivered the main address, in which he stressed the dangerous influence of revisionist tendencies in the work of Czechoslovak writers since 1956. (*Rude Pravo* [Prague], March 2, 3 and 6.)

*Rude Pravo*, March 6, also announced that the director of the Ceskoslovensky Spisovatel publishing house, Ladislav Fikar, had been replaced by Jan Pilar, editor-in-chief of *Literarni Noviny* (the official organ of the Writers' Union). Apparently the main reason for dropping Fikar from the publishing house was that he published a number of books last year which the regime labeled "anti-Socialist." Josef Rybak, an ideological commentator for the Party paper *Rude Pravo*, became the new editor-in-chief of *Literarni Noviny*.

### Composers Under Fire

Composers, too, did not escape the Party watchdogs. On February 24, the day before the Second Congress of the Czechoslovak Composers' Union was to begin, *Rude Pravo* published an editorial warning the composers "to oppose

## Current Developments—Czechoslovakia

all demonstrations of bourgeois modernism, trash and empty aestheticism [and] to draw inspiration from the life and struggles of our people. . . . We cannot but note with alarm how trash still flourishes, especially in the sphere of dance and light music and adversely affects broad masses of our people, in particular the youth. Effort, therefore, must be made . . . to bring about an artistic and qualitative improvement of musical programs so that they may become an effective weapon of our Socialist ideology and morality." The four-day Congress produced a resolution in which the composers promised to be guided by the dictates of the Party.

### Other Criticisms

Under the title, "For Closer Links Between Film Creation and the Life of the People," the First Production Festival of Czechoslovak Films\* opened in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, February 22. On the following day Dr. Frantisek Kahuda, Minister of Education and Culture, addressed the film makers. According to *Mlada Fronta* (Prague), February 24, he stated: "There still remain many artists . . . who proclaim that art should only be a testimony of the period . . . a passive and objective picture of our life, from the point of view of an objective author. . . . In their consequences these theories are an obvious revision of the basic Leninist concepts on the task of art in society. . . . The people will not like your art if you do not picture in it what drives our society ahead."

Objectivity in newspaper reporting and a dearth of progressive "Socialist" plays were other aspects of the February assault on Czechoslovak culture. On the latter point, Radio Prague, February 13, stated: "embarrassment over depicting the present life of our people is manifest in the theatrical repertory. . . . [For] if the number of classical plays exceeds 50 percent of the repertory, there is a disproportion. Another clever move designed to circumvent the crux of Socialist problems is the exaggerated staging of progressive plays by authors writing within a capitalist society. Plays from Socialist countries are staged only rarely in our theaters. We know almost nothing of new Soviet plays."

Even newspapers faithful to the Party line but still retaining vestiges of journalistic objectivity are apparently neglecting their duty. According to Radio Bratislava, February 10, "there is no reason for complacency over the fact that there are no revisionist trends in our press. . . . we cannot content ourselves with the fact that what our press publishes is correct. In the present stage of development the second basic task of our press is to move to the forefront—that is, to promote Communist ideas, to picture contemporary events in the light of Marxism-Leninism, to criticize relentlessly the old and the reactionary, and to refute militantly the relics of bourgeois ideology. [Instead,] we see that critical material predominates in several papers, and that there is a shortage of positive comment on present Socialist life."

\* This was not a normal Film Festival, but rather a gathering of people in the film-making industry who discussed problems of film production and ideology.



A scene from a new Czechoslovak film, destined for the Cannes Film Festival, in which the puppets of Jiri Trnka perform "A Midsummer-Night's Dream." Above: at the court of Theseus, Duke of Athens.

Photo from *Svet v Obrazech*, March 7, 1959

Other attacks on the press occurred in *Rude Pravo* on February 28, when it accused *Kveten* (a magazine for young writers) of "ideological blunders," and criticized the review, *Svetova Literatura*, for reprinting works "which show an unmistakably bourgeois mentality and which have not been evaluated by a Marxist commentary."

### 1958 Plan Fulfillment

An expanding industry and a stagnating agriculture were the highlights of the State Statistical Office's report on the economy during 1958. (*Rude Pravo* [Prague], February 11.) The report also showed that the regime has been able to prevent any significant increase in real wages, which in previous years were said to be rising faster than productivity. Industrial production was said to have risen by 11.3 percent during 1958, labor productivity by 7.4 percent and average money wages by 2.2 percent. Production of the means of production rose by 11.8 percent, and production of consumer goods by 10.6 percent. In contrast, the gross value of agricultural production rose only 3.4 percent. *Rude Pravo* said on February 12 that the slow progress in agriculture (which is lagging far behind the goals set by the Second Five Year Plan) made it difficult to carry out all the promised improvements in the living standard:

"We wish to continue to reduce the share of food costs in the people's total cost of living, which is the best way to raise the living standard, particularly for families with low earnings per capita. We cannot continue to achieve this by purchasing abroad, in exchange for our industrial products, vast quantities of grain, meat, fats and other foods, in spite of the fact that we have all the conditions for producing a substantial part of them at home. An increase in agricultural production therefore becomes our foremost task."

## Current Developments—Czechoslovakia

The report gave the following production figures (percentage increases over 1957 in parentheses): bituminous coal, 25.8 million tons (7); brown coal, 54.3 million tons (11); lignite, 2.5 million tons (13); electric power, 19.6 billion kwh (11); pig iron, 3.8 million tons (6); steel, 5.5 million tons (7); rolled steel, 3.8 million tons (8); sulfuric acid, 463,000 tons (4); nitrogenous fertilizer, 108,000 tons (46); phosphorous fertilizer, 117,000 tons (6); gasoline 355,000 tons (14); synthetic fibers, 55,000 tons (14); machine tools, 22,000; automatic and semi-automatic lathes, 1,000; motor cars, 43,000; motorcycles, 147,000; meat products, 173,000 tons (3); fats, 59,000 tons (7); butter, 58,000 tons (11); milk, 898 million liters (3); sugar beets, 6,906,000 tons (2); hops, 7,000 tons.

Total investment in the national economy came to 33.1 billion *koruny*, out of which 13 billion were invested in industry (12.3 percent more than in 1957) and 5.3 billion in agriculture (17 percent more than in 1957). Foreign trade rose by 4.4 percent, calculated in prices on foreign markets, with imports stable and exports up by 10.8 percent. Trade with the Soviet bloc increased, while trade with other countries decreased.

### 1959 Budget

Minister of Finance Julius Duris presented the 1959 State budget to the National Assembly on February 19. (*Rude Pravo*, February 20.) Total revenue is set at 96.2 billion *koruny* and expenditure at 95.9 billion *koruny*. In outline, the new budget differed little from that of the previous year, except that the allotment for welfare was higher (reflecting planned increases in pensions and family allow-

ances) and the expenses of State administration had been whittled down. The figures given were as follows, compared with last year's planned budget (in billions of *koruny*):

	1959	1958
<b>Revenue</b> .....	96.2	94.7
Turnover tax .....	50.4	49.8
Profits of industry .....	13.8	13.4
Direct taxes .....	11.3	11.3
Social insurance premiums .....	17.6	17.6
Other .....	3.1	2.6
<b>Expenditure</b> .....	95.9	94.5
National economy .....	45.7	45.3
Investment .....	—	26.9
Agriculture .....	10.8	10.5
Other .....	—	7.9
Social and cultural .....	38.4	36.9
Defense .....	8.8	8.9
Administration .....	3.0	3.4
<b>Surplus</b> .....	0.3	0.2

Slovakia's share in the total budget will be 15.7 *koruny* of the revenue and 17.5 billion *koruny* of the expenditure.

### Family Allowances Raised, Prices Cut

Following up the promises of its "letter to the people" of last November (see *East Europe*, January, p. 54), the Central Committee issued a decision reducing the prices of certain consumer goods and raising family allowances for parents with three or more children. (*Rude Pravo* [Prague], March 7.) The price reductions, estimated to total 2.3 billion *koruny* a year, apply to "basic types of food and clothing" and to certain industrial consumer goods, and are on the order of 10-20 percent. Among the items included are: sugar, lard, butter, flour, rice, bakery products, noodles, preserves, children's wear, work clothes, washing machines and vacuum cleaners. Deputy Premier Ludmila Jankovcova, who made the report on raising living standards to the Central Committee, stressed shortcomings in agriculture as the chief reason why food prices could not be lowered more substantially:

"In this connection it must be said that one of the gravest economic problems is centered in the problem of reducing food prices. On the one hand we would require, mainly in the interests of raising the living standards of large families, that food prices be as low as possible. On the other hand, of course, food prices cannot be fixed arbitrarily. . . . The situation now, contrary to opinions widely held, is such that some food prices are subsidized and in other cases tax yield [State profit—Ed.] is infinitesimal. This is true, for instance, of such important articles as beef, milk, butter, poultry and eggs, which form a substantial part of total food sales. . . . After the price reductions now being carried out . . . possibilities of major cuts in food prices will remain for only a few types of foodstuffs."

The increases in family allowances will total 502 million *koruny* a year. Mrs. Jankovcova said frankly that the increases were intended to "contribute to an improvement in population trends, which have hitherto not been quite satisfactory"; i.e., were intended to raise the birth-rate. The in-



A dance in the little town of Tvrdonice, in Moravia, Czechoslovakia. The people here still retain the old folk-costumes, the caption states, and wear them as a matter of course on festive occasions such as this.

Photo from *Svet v Obrazech* (Prague), February 28, 1959

creases (which apply only to families of three or more children) will vary according to the monthly wage of the family breadwinner. For example, if the family head earns less than 1,400 *koruny* per month, the allowance will be 260 *koruny* for each child after the second, an increase of 120 *koruny*. If he earns between 1,400 and 2,200 *koruny*, the allowance will be 230 *koruny* for the third child and 240 for subsequent children. Allowances are to be reduced for families with less than three children where the chief income is more than 3,000 *koruny* per month, and withdrawn altogether if the income exceeds 3,800 *koruny*.

There will also be increases in the lowest old-age and disability pensions, totalling 200 million *koruny* annually. These increases will not apply to "former entrepreneurs and representatives of the capitalist system."

### "Spies Unmasked"

Periodically Czechoslovakia intensifies its anti-American campaign by announcing the discovery of so-called American intelligence agents. On February 17, the official Czechoslovak press service stated that Frantisek Zeinar, a Czechoslovak citizen of German nationality, had disclosed that he had been enlisted by the American intelligence service in 1956, but had soon informed the Czechoslovak security organs of his activities and continued his work under the supervision of Czechoslovak counter-intelligence.

The regional court in Ostrava on February 27 pronounced sentences on a six-member group of "agents and spies of the American intelligence service." The ostensible leader, Bretislav Jandasek, was sentenced *in absentia* to 25 years imprisonment. The other five accused received sentences ranging from 5 to 11 years. (*Lidova Demokracie* [Prague], February 28.)

Also widely publicized was the trial of four men accused of cooperating with the German Gestapo in the liquidation of Czechoslovak resistance fighters during the occupation. They were sentenced on February 27 in the regional court in Brno and received prison terms ranging from 11 to 24 years. (Radio Prague, February 28.)

### Technical Development Committee Formed

According to *Rude Pravo* (Prague), February 15, the Czechoslovak government has decided to set up a Committee for Technical Development, to be headed by Minister Vaclav Ouzky, former Minister of Precision Engineering. This new committee will include a center for technical and economic information, and supervise a bureau of standards and an office for patents and inventions.

The latter two establishments will be created by subdividing the existing Office for Inventions and Standards, which has been headed by Dr. Alexej Cepicka, former First Deputy Premier and Politburo member, and son-in-law of the late President and Party leader Klement Gottwald. Cepicka was demoted from his governmental and Party functions in the spring of 1956, when he was accused of fostering his own "cult of personality." Cepicka's role, if any, under the new system was not announced.

### Cadre Divisions Abolished

After the Communist coup in 1948, so-called cadre divi-

sions, whose primary purpose was to check the political reliability of employees, were formed in plants and other enterprises, replacing the personnel departments. These units consisted of Party stalwarts who often knew little or nothing about the technical problems of the factory workers they supervised. Universally detested, a target of bitter satire, these cadre divisions are at last to be abandoned, although the apparatus they created will remain in effect. In the future, cadre work will be in the hands of department chiefs and foremen who will be expected to cooperate with the Party organization. According to *Rude Pravo* (Prague), February 20, "in order to apply himself correctly to cadre work the manager cannot merely rely on his own knowledge of people. [He must] lean on the Party organization and fully respect its opinions and recommendations."

### Class Discrimination on Scholarships

Resentment over the policy of awarding scholarships primarily to workers' children and consequent discrimination against children of the intelligentsia has recently come to the surface with the publication of two letters in *Rude Pravo* (Prague), February 14, addressed to the education editor, Vera Michalkova. A college graduate wrote as follows: "I am not a worker. I am a college-trained

### War is Peace, Hate is Love

THE JANUARY 1959 issue of the Czechoslovak Party Central Committee monthly magazine, *Nova Mysl*, Prague, carried a long article on the problems of "building a Socialist army." Some of the most striking of these problems appeared in the following passages:

"Certain wrong views among the people stand in the way of a consistent strengthening of Socialist relationships between the army and the people. First among these is the underestimation of the real danger existing from the aggressive forces of imperialism. In addition, pacifist elements, a bourgeois abhorrence of violence, a short-sighted aversion to everything that 'smells of gunpowder,' must be mentioned here. People with such views see war from a non-Party point of view, they do not differentiate between just and unjust wars, do not respect the objective necessity of making the Socialist fatherland secure. They do not look on military measures as an indispensable part of the fight for peace. These bourgeois pacifist tendencies are sometimes even supported by certain false tones in our own peace propaganda. Such tones awaken fear of war instead of raising people to the idea of an active fight against the aggressors, a fight with all available means, if necessary with weapons.

"The shortcomings in the defense education of citizens have adverse effects on the young boys who start their compulsory military service. Many of them have had insufficient political preparation to understand the importance of their military service. The defense of one's country requires not only active Socialist patriotism, but also hatred for the class enemy."



## Current Developments—Bulgaria



Two peasants in front of the local "House of Culture": "You see, neighbor, when we were young we had to fight in a dingy little tavern. . . ."

Ludas Matyi (Budapest), February 5, 1959

mechanical engineer . . . and I try as best I can to work . . . usefully for our Socialist country. I am under the impression that we who work with our brains are supposed to be something worse than the workers. Don't you think that this is unjust? [Why] should my son be worse off than the son of my comrade-worker who makes just about the same salary as I do and whose work is in no way more important than mine? What is decisive, after all, is the attitude a man takes toward society, and not his position or origin."

This complaint was echoed by a woman from Brno: "Let us assume that the son of a mathematics professor, who has great talent, will have no choice to study simply because his father has had an education. This seems illogical and unjustified to me. Isn't the intelligentsia equal to other people? Doesn't it have the same obligations and rights?"

To refute these arguments the education editor produced the following statistics: "Of 13.5 million inhabitants the working class represents 78.6 percent, the members of the intelligentsia, 18.7 percent, yet only 40 percent of the college students hail from the ranks of the workers and farmers. If anyone is wronged, it is not the intelligentsia but the workers' and farmers' children."

### BULGARIA

#### 1958 Plan Fulfillment

Bulgaria's industrial production rose by 16 percent during 1958, exceeding the plan by six percent, according to the official communique of the Central Statistical Administration (*Rabotnichesko Delo* [Sofia], January 25). The performance in the agricultural sector was admittedly not so good, with some of the staple crops smaller than in 1957. National income went up by 7 percent, retail trade by 11 percent, and pension payments by 30 percent. While the communique claimed that the investment plan had been 98.6 percent fulfilled, this was at variance with an earlier statement (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, October 24, 1958) that in the first nine months of the year the investment plan

had been only 87 percent fulfilled. Production figures were given as follows (percentage increases over 1957 in parentheses): electric power, 3,024 million kwh (14); coal, 12,730,000 tons (7); copper ore, 702,000 tons (25); lead-zinc ore, 2,241,000 tons (15); lead concentrate, 101,000 tons (12); zinc concentrate, 96,000 tons (11); steel, 211,000 tons (32); rolled metals, 138,800 tons (19); lead, 26,000 tons (37); zinc, 8,200 tons (10); electric motors, 131,600 tons (27); radio sets, 131,000 (21); grain combines, 1,600 (22); freight cars, 1,297 (12); nitrogenous fertilizers, 133,400 tons (9); phosphorous fertilizers, 74,000 tons (334); calcined soda, 103,700 tons (10); sulfuric acid, 64,000 tons (58); caustic soda, 14,800 tons (15); cement, 934,000 tons (6); cellulose, 17,500 tons (10); paper, 47,100 tons (3); plate glass, 4,091,000 sq. meters (12); automobile tires, 117,900 (14); cotton fabrics, 168.6 million meters (11); wool fabrics, 14.2 million meters (7); silk fabrics, 6.8 million meters (8); shoes, 6,372,000 pairs (23); meat, 138,800 tons (22); canned vegetables, 79,400 tons (minus 2); canned fruit, 91,200 tons (54); cheese, 26,800 tons (19); yellow cheese, 3,500 tons (7); vegetable oil, 73,900 tons (22); lard, 18,900 tons (79); sugar, 149,000 tons (27); grape wine, 204.3 million liters (72); brandy 21.1 million liters (48); beer, 74 million liters (25).

Contributing to the economic growth was an expansion of the labor force; the number of persons in nonagricultural employment was said to have increased by eight percent during the year. Labor productivity in industry, building and transport rose six or seven percent.

### Bulgaria's Fantastic "Big Leap"

THE HARSH, fantastic program of economic development that has been imposed upon the Bulgarian people by the Party may be studied in capsule form below. The production figures, taken from official publications, compare the economy's past performance with what is now planned for the near future.

	1956	1957	1958	Plan for 1962
Coal (thousand tons) . .	10,817	11,886	12,730	23,772
Electric power (million kwh) . . . . .	2,393	2,655	3,024	6-7,000
Cement (thousand tons) . . . . .	859	880	934	2,300
Steel (thousand tons) . .	130	170	210	400
Cotton fabrics (million meters) . . . . .	142	152	168	280-300
Sugar (thousand tons) . .	107	117	149	348
Canned vegetables (thousand tons) . . . . .	79	94	79	228
Cotton, raw (thousand tons) . . . . .	40	49	—	210
Grapes (thousand tons) . .	399	572	837	1,500
Meat and poultry, live weight (thousand tons) . . . . .	399	402	—	1,180

### Church Leader Defends Greek Communist

As the trial of the Greek Communist leader, Manolis Glezos, approached in Greece, most of the Soviet bloc countries had formed committees to protest the proceedings. Most noteworthy of all the statements made in this connection was the opinion expressed by Patriarch Kiril of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, who defended Glezos for "his patriotism [and] his bold exploits during the German occupation of his fatherland—Greece." (Radio Sofia, February 16.)

## ROMANIA

### Jewish Emigration

Ever since the first reports of large-scale emigration from Romania to Israel appeared in the Western press in January, the effects of this policy on power relations in the Middle East have been severely criticized throughout the Arab world. (See *East Europe*, March, p. 12.) First the USSR, then Romania denied that there had been any change in the anti-Zionist attitude of their respective governments. On February 19, Radio Moscow broadcast, in Arabic, the following statements: "Some Lebanese newspapers quoting American press services have recently published news concerning Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel, which has no basis in fact. . . . It must be understood by all that the principles of Soviet foreign policy are unchanged, and that this policy has always aimed and will always aim at supporting fully the Arab people who are struggling for consolidation of their independence and stabilization of peace." In following weeks Moscow was to repeat this position.

### Rational Response

NOT LONG AGO, the American press reported that young Simeon of Bulgaria, who is exiled from the throne of that country, had been promoted to sergeant on the student corps of the military academy he attends here. It was a genial account, but somewhat less than earth-shaking, and surely would have escaped the notice of the Bulgarian people if Radio Sofia, March 7, had not seen fit to broadcast the item in the most rabid tone. After giving the report of Simeon's promotion, the commentator went on to describe a dog cemetery in New York where, he alleged, millionaires set up monuments in memory of their deceased four-legged friends. He expressed the hope that Simeon, "the two-legged servant of the Americans," will also be some day buried in this cemetery. He went on to describe Simeon's hypothetical grave, "made of nylon," on which will be written "in neon" the epitaph: "All his life he was our slave, now he deserves this grave."



A Jewish wedding in the Great Synagogue in Bucharest. The photograph appeared in an article in the English-language propaganda monthly *Rumania Today* (Bucharest), No. 11, 1957, illustrating an article claiming that there was complete religious freedom in Romania. After many years in which emigration from Romania was impossible, it was recently reported that up to 10,000 Jews a month had been permitted to leave the country for Israel.

Romania's reply came on February 25, when *Scinteia* (Bucharest) printed a violent attack on Israel and Zionism, and accused the Israeli and Western press of launching a "provocative campaign" over the "so-called mass emigration" of Jews from Romania in order to disturb the friendly relations between Romania and the Arab countries. *Scinteia* revealed that the "truth" regarding the emigration of Romanian Jews was as follows: "On the basis of humanitarian considerations, the Romanian authorities permitted the departure of those citizens who have relatives in Israel . . . so that they could be reunited with their families." Nevertheless, the article offered no explanation for the sudden resumption of this "humanitarian policy" after an almost seven-year interruption, and gave no indication about the future of this policy.

In the meantime, according to the *New York Times*, March 9, "several hundred Jews continue to arrive [in Vienna] daily from Romania bound for Israel." Other reports from Austria pointed to a marked reduction, or even a halt, in the flow of emigrants following Arab protests.

### Israeli Diplomat Ousted

Radio Bucharest, March 8, broadcast, in Yiddish, the fact that the Romanian government had declared Amnon Keren, an attaché of the Israeli delegation in Bucharest, *persona non grata*, and had ordered him to leave the country. He was accused of engaging in espionage activity "with the aid of members of the legation, Romanian citizens, and of other well-known Zionist elements." These allegations were denied by Israel, and on March 10 the Israeli Foreign Ministry officially lodged a protest with the Romanian minister in Tel Aviv.

### Jewish Writer Honored

In an apparent effort to appease the Jewish minorities still living in their countries and public sentiment abroad,

## Current Developments—Romania, Albania

both Romania and the Soviet Union announced the celebration of the centenary of the birth of the Yiddish author, Shalom Aleichem, on March 2. This was hailed by the Bucharest radio, March 2, as "further proof of the free development of the cultures of minorities in Romania."

### Minority Schools Threatened

At the National Conference of the Union of Students' Associations, held in Bucharest, February 19-22, a "proposal" to abolish separate minority schools was made. One of the sponsors, Professor Ludovic Takacs of the Hungarian University of Cluj, declared that "we cannot continue the separation of schools by nationalities, because it is impossible [in this way] to bring up youth in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, devotion to the people and the cause of the working class." (*Scinteia* [Bucharest], February 21.)

In another speech before the Conference, Party boss Gheorghiu-Dej stated that "a determined struggle must be carried out against the remnants of bourgeois mentality and morals, against the influence of bourgeois concepts in science and against mystic prejudices which prevent the person ruled by them to become a truly valuable intellectual. The liquidation . . . of such thinking requires constant ideological work." Referring to the "fraternity policy" of the regime, he saw schools "as a powerful means of rapprochement between young people of all nationalities, of eliminating tendencies of national isolation and the remains of national antagonism cultivated by the exploiting classes."

His sentiments were echoed by Ion Iliescu, re-elected Chairman of the Council of Students' Associations, who asserted that "there still appears in the student body . . .

certain isolated manifestations of nationalism and chauvinism, certain tendencies toward national isolation." (*Scinteia*, February 20.)

How the new policy toward minority schools would evolve was not disclosed at that time. Minister of Education, Atanase Joja, limited himself to declaring that "in the light of Lenin's teachings [that] the youth of diverse nationalities living within the same State be taught in the same schools, we consider as quite worthy the proposals made by the students from Cluj University and from the Pharmaceutical Institute of Tirgu Mures [capital of the Autonomous Hungarian Region]." (*Scinteia*, February 24.)

These latest developments indicate once again that the regime has so far been unable to overcome ferment among intellectuals in the Autonomous Hungarian Region and Transylvania in general. Ever since the Hungarian Revolt, which apparently had far-reaching effects on the Hungarian minority, there have been numerous indications of continued unrest among professors, students and writers (see article on writers in this issue).

## ALBANIA

### 1958 Plan Fulfillment

The official report on the results of the 1958 economic plan was published in *Zeri i Popullit* (Tirana), February 1. Industrial production was 20 percent higher than in 1957, although the plan for capital investment was fulfilled only 88 percent. The report gave no harvest figures. Collective farms now cover 76.2 percent of the cultivated land and include 63.2 percent of the farmers.

Figures for industrial production were given as follows (percentage increases over 1957 in parentheses): electric power, 150 million kwh (20); coal, 255,677 tons (8); crude oil, 403,197 tons (minus 18); benzine, 31,227 tons (46); gasoline, 49,934 tons (31); bitumen, 182,724 tons (24); natural bitumen, 32,226 tons (minus 12); chrome ore, 201,252 tons (20); copper ore, 87,460 tons (56); iron ore, 88,240 tons; timber, 146,913 cubic meters (18); cement, 77,552 tons (10); bricks, 76 million (12); tiles, 18 million (92); cotton textiles, 22 million meters (16); woolen textiles, 738,000 meters (64); shoes and sandals, 740,000 pairs (14); rubber sandals, 660,000 pairs (24); cigarettes and tobacco, 2,072 tons (88); soap, 3,326 tons (19); sugar, 10,275 tons (14); olive oil, 2,813 tons (minus 12); cheese 2,819 tons (138); butter, 407 tons (62); beer, 51,046 hectoliters (10).



"Well, your cartoon attacking religious superstition is pretty good, and I think we can publish it in the next issue."

"Thank God."

*Urzica* (Bucharest), November 15, 1958

(Continued from page 19)

Plan will provide for the planting of trees throughout the Great Hungarian Plain. Go to the Great Plain, visit the outskirts of Szeged, see how the planters work. Felling trees is no subject for a movie."

That was that. The theater got wind of what had happened to us and stopped rehearsals. Poor Torok had fared even worse than Gabor Barabas had with his story about the nationalized department store.

The sensible thing would have been to rip up the script or stuff it in a bottom drawer. But the situation was not that simple. First of all, Torok had already been paid a few thousand *forint* in advance and, as usually happened, drama chief Kovacs became entranced with the Minister's suggestions. "Excellent," he declared, "a brilliant idea. A movie must be made on forestation. Go to Szeged and have a look around."

Torok and I packed our bags. In no time at all we were standing in the ankle-deep forest watching young girls planting seeds. An icy wind was blowing. Suddenly Torok began to laugh. I looked at him in dismay. What was there to laugh at? "Oh," he said, "I was just wondering what Farkas will do with his song the *March of the Lumberjacks*."

Actually, he did nothing. Torok and I struggled with the script for about six months, trying to make *Song of the Forest* into a song of the Great Plain. We patched together two different versions, but one was worse than the other, useless for either a movie or a musical. Hegedus, the great advocate of the constructive approach, had certainly managed to destroy a promising project.

However, revenge came from the public. The people would not be fooled. While long lines formed before theaters featuring Italian films, Hungarian movies failed consistently. Even productions which deserved a better fate—such as *Sign of Life* and *The Merry-go-round* by Zoltan Fabry were box office flops. The Party began to realize that the situation was hopeless, that movies with a "message" were doomed to fail. The movie chiefs turned to "neutral topics" in the hope of luring the public and saving the day. An old, popular musical by Geno Huszka was filmed and turned out to be a tremendous success. In fact, it was too successful, considering its quality. The movie moguls finally woke up to the secret of its popularity: the setting was during the Turkish occupation of Hungary.

### *A Thousand Times No*

In the meantime, I worked with Armand Szanto and Mihaly Szecsen on a script for a light comedy called *Quiet Home* dealing with some of the problems created by the acute housing shortage. The story was never approved.

In collaboration with Miklos Gyarfás we worked on another script describing comical incidents which take place in a public steam bath in a small town. This also was rejected.

Then I wrote a synopsis of the short stories of Endre Andor Gelleri, the brilliant writer of the Thirties, but my suggestions were turned down. Gelleri, they said, was a fake proletarian.

Then I wrote an original story of nearly one hundred pages based on an incident that had taken place in Budapest. The story began with a pharmacy mixing up two prescriptions and issuing a fatal drug to a little boy. It described the desperate search for the boy during one feverish night and the fate of various individuals involved. It was not approved.

But why go on? My career in the movie industry was drawing to an inevitable end. In 1955, I wrote a play entitled *After the Storm* which was accepted by the Madach Theater. The setting was 1945 and I depicted events at that time from my own personal viewpoint. The day after the premiere the play was banned.

This was unprecedented. Every play and script was subjected to such extensive censorship by so many authorities that by the time it appeared before the public it was usually politically letter-perfect. *After the Storm* was the first play to meet such a fate. This, of course, sealed my fate. How can a person be a frogman if it is discovered that he is drowning? The studio and I parted and, once relieved of my duties, which I had come to detest thoroughly, I promptly sat down and wrote a light comedy. The Madach Theater accepted it, the cast was selected, and rehearsals began. However, Minister Darvas, the lord of culture and public education, was not satisfied. *Marriage of Convenience* was sentenced to death.

And then? What happened then is far beyond the scope of this article.

During the Revolt, a number of directors and technicians formed a revolutionary council in the studio. Kovacs got the sack and so did Mrs. Kemeny. Darvas was beaten up on the street, and a certain Banyasz, formerly a director, begged to be retained as an electrician. The reprieve, however, was bitterly short. After the Revolt was suppressed, these people returned and fired those who had removed them. Darvas was not reappointed Minister but as a consolation prize was made head of the studio.

There was a change in movie policy. No new scripts were written—after all, what could one write about?

They used old stories and scripts. They started shooting *Quiet Home* and a screen adaptation of Gelleri's novel *Iron Flower*. Finally, I heard that they had even filmed my story about the mixed-up prescriptions, under the title *What a Night*. It is still showing in Budapest theaters.

All this was cold comfort. Too many people had died for anyone to be pleased about the Party's acceptance of once-rejected scripts.

By now the Party has begun to attack the industry for these frivolous products. Once again the Communists are insisting that movies should deal with "profound problems," adhering loyally to the Party line. Once again they demand stories about kolkhozes and workers, for soon Hungary will be the country of iron and steel.

Sometimes I imagine that the evening show is starting in Budapest and that *What a Night* comes on the screen. Naturally, my name is not mentioned as co-author, but I wonder what has happened to the original story and how the movie finally took shape. But no matter what has happened to the movie or any other, I am glad that I am not there to have to witness the result.



## Recent and Related

**The Communist Party of Poland**, by M. K. Dziewanowski (Harvard University Press, \$7.50). An objective, scholarly book, important for all students of Communism and Eastern Europe. Professor Dziewanowski discusses the developments of the Polish Communist Party from the beginnings of the Socialist movement in Poland, through the later split between Social Democrats and "Social Patriots" (i.e. the Polish Socialist Party), the founding of the Polish Communist Party and its fate in independent Poland, its dissolution by Moscow and re-establishment during the war, the Party's postwar seizure of power and its main policies up to October 1956. The last portion of the book is devoted to the October Revolution and Gomulka's return to power, and the pursuit of a "middle course" combining Communist domination with a measure of independence from the strict Soviet ideological line. This is the first systematic history of the Polish Communist Party in any language.

**The United States and China**, by John King Fairbank (Harvard University Press, \$5.50). First published ten years ago, this now appears in an extensively revised and enlarged new edition. The author, a professor of history at Harvard, provides an excellent synthesis of interpretive scholarship on China. After analyzing the nature of Chinese society, China's political tradition, her inherited modes of thought, basic beliefs and values, he goes on to appraise those elements of China's tradition which buttress the present Communist regime: autocratic government, the governing elite trained in a single orthodoxy, forced labor, bureaucratic control of the economy, etc. Finally, Mr. Fairbank examines the perplexing problem of America's relations with Communist China. He feels that the disparities in values and in resources per capita will tend to keep America and China apart indefinitely, and unless we have a practical idea of what is being done and what can be done in China, we can neither minimize the disparities nor criticize Peiping effectively. Index, suggested reading, charts and maps.

**Communist Economic Strategy**, by Jan Wazelaki (National Planning Association, \$3.00). The first report in an NPA series on the Economics of Competitive

Coexistence. This concise but thoroughly documented scientific study deals primarily with the economic gains derived by the USSR from its political domination of East European countries, and the effects of Soviet economic policy on this territory. Having examined the potential and development of the area, the author points out that the economies of the Satellite bloc are becoming increasingly integrated with that of the Soviet Union, and describes how they are being used effectively in the Soviet trade-and-aid offensive.

**Land Without Justice**, by Milovan Djilas (Harcourt, Brace and Company, \$5.75). This is the autobiography of the young Milovan Djilas, who rose to be second-in-command to Tito and a leading Communist figure, and now, having renounced Communism, lies in a Yugoslav prison. It is also the story of his family's life in a little-known land, Montenegro. His memories are of heroism and violence and the Montenegrins come vividly to life in Djilas's intense, poetic writing. Index.

**Modern Russian Historiography**, by Anatole G. Mazour (Van Nostrand, \$6.50). A revised edition of the author's "An Outline of Modern Russian Historiography," the volume is a bibliographical study of Russian historians and their approach to Russian history, from the medieval chroniclers up to the Marxist and non-Marxist writers of the twentieth century. General bibliography, Index.

**Britain's Discovery of Russia**, by M. S. Anderson (St. Martin's Press, \$6.75). A study of Anglo-Russian relations with the emphasis on British reactions towards a developing Russia, from the Elizabethan era through the Napoleonic Wars, and Russia's emergence as a significant power in Europe. The author is a Lecturer in Political History at the London School of Economics.

**Trotsky's Diary in Exile-1935**, by Leon Trotsky (Harvard University Press, \$4.00). An extremely personal record of Trotsky's life as a fugitive in France and Norway. There are penetrating comments on local and international politics, as well as reflections on his private problems as a revolutionary intellectual and as a family man. Index, illustrations.

**Soviet Policy and the Chinese Communists, 1931-1946**, by Charles B. McLane (Columbia University Press, \$5.50). A volume in the Studies of the Russian Institute of Columbia University. The broad purpose of the book is to discover what political, ideological, or other links there were between Moscow and Chinese Communism during fifteen crucial years which would explain the emergence of the post-1949 alliance between the Communist Peiping and the Kremlin. All external signs of the period seemed to indicate to the West that such an alliance would ultimately be weak; in actual fact it is one of the strongest at the disposal of the USSR today. Dr. McLane discusses the fate of the Chinese Communists during their "lean" years, the relations between the USSR and the Nationalist government and the events of the period which were material to the Moscow-Yenan relations. He analyzes the ambiguities in the Soviet attitude toward the Chinese Communists and points out the underlying solidarity of the two Communist groups, world opinion to the contrary. The reasons for the official 1945 Soviet encouragement of the US in its view that the Chinese were "agrarian reformers" rather than "real" Communists receive special emphasis. Other points discussed are the lack of Soviet intervention in the internal political affairs of the Chinese Communists and the absence of articulated Russian disapproval of Chinese Communist policies after January 1931. The text proceeds chronologically beginning with the Kiangsi period in 1931 and ending with Soviet-Chinese-American relations in 1946. Footnotes, appendix, bibliography, index.

**Facts About Hungary**, compiled by Imre Kovacs (Hungarian Committee, \$1.00). A useful paperback compendium which covers the history of the Hungarians, the postwar era, The Revolt, Hungary and the United Nations, the Nagy case, and a supplement covering the legal aspects of Soviet Armed Forces in Hungary, the judicial system of the Kadar regime, and Hungarian minorities under Communist rule. An appendix gives statistical information, a chronology lists important events and dates. The booklet may be obtained by writing to the Hungarian Committee, 125 E. 72nd St., New York 21, N. Y.



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